Interconnected Databases on Medieval Manuscripts at the IRHT (France): *Medium, Bibale, Jonas, Initiale,* and the 'Bibliothèque virtuelle des manuscrits médiévaux' (BVMM)

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What I would like to present to you today is a lot for the limited time at my disposal. It will therefore be rather sketchy, I am afraid, but I hope it will give a general idea and it will inspire you to take a closer look at these tools by yourself on the Internet.

The following databases are tools available on the Internet for the study of medieval manuscripts:

- MEDIUM[1]: about medieval manuscripts
- JONAS[2]: about medieval manuscripts and texts in French
- INITIALE[3]: about medieval illuminated manuscripts preserved in France
- BVMM[4]: reproductions from manuscripts preserved in French public collections
- BIBALE[5]: about historic collections and manuscript provenance
- [another linked database: PINAKES[6]: about medieval manuscripts and texts in Greek]

I am myself responsible for the Bibale Database about historic collections and manuscript provenance, so I will start off with that one and mainly focus on it. But the final aim is to show you also the variety of tools available at the IRHT and how we are building interoperability between the different tools.

BIBALE is a database for researching historic collections and medieval manuscript provenance.

It makes available data on medieval and early modern collections and on the transmission of medieval manuscripts. This tool has been developed over the last

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[1] http://medium.irht.cnrs.fr/

[2] http://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr/

[3] http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/

[4] http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/

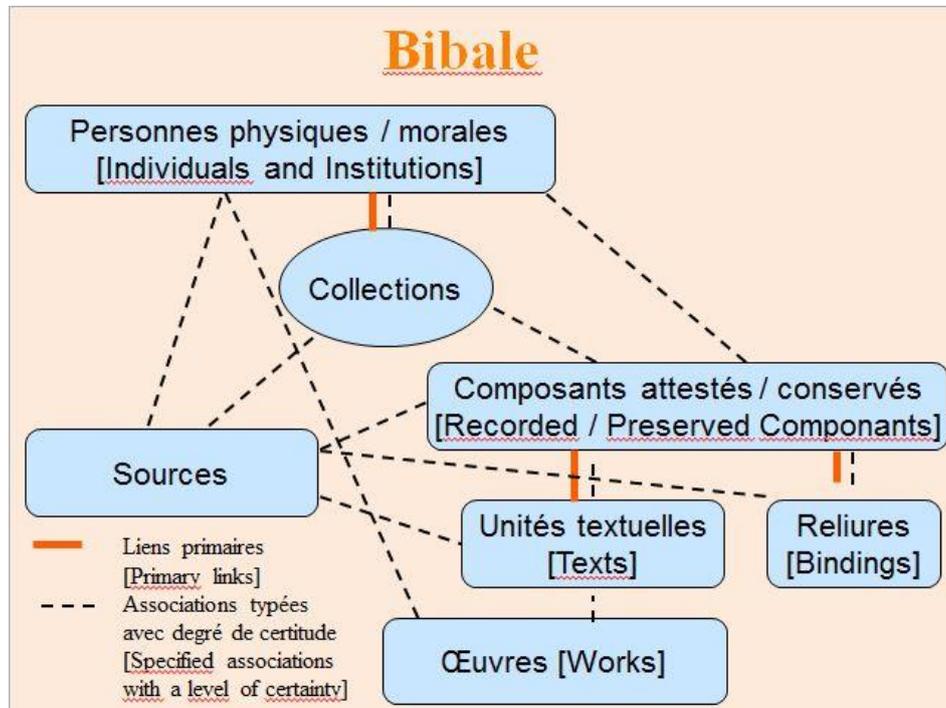[5] http://bibale.irht.cnrs.fr/

[6] http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/

years at the *Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes* (IRHT-CNRS) in Paris and is officially online in a first form since May 2014. It is a database in French, but the introductory pages are available in English as well since September 2014.

BIBALE[7]

BIBALE is structured to describe:

- persons: we distinguish "personnes physiques" (individuals) and "personnes morales" (institutions, e.g. churches, abbeys, communities of friars, university colleges, etc.)
- collections (libraries, private book collections),
- books; the word currently used in French is "composant", meaning "component", that is the object a collection is composed of. So technically BIBALE could describe all kinds of collections, but the database concentrates on medieval manuscripts. Two kinds of components should be distinguished:
  - preserved components ("composants conservés"), i.e. existing manuscripts with a current shelf mark or at least a shelf mark or a sales catalogue reference of the 19th, 20th or 21st century, and
  - recorded components ("composants attestés"), i.e. manuscripts mentioned in medieval or early modern sources, especially in inventories and other book lists ;
- sources: inventories, ex-libris, colophons, heraldic arms and other elements that tell us something about the passing of a manuscript through collections
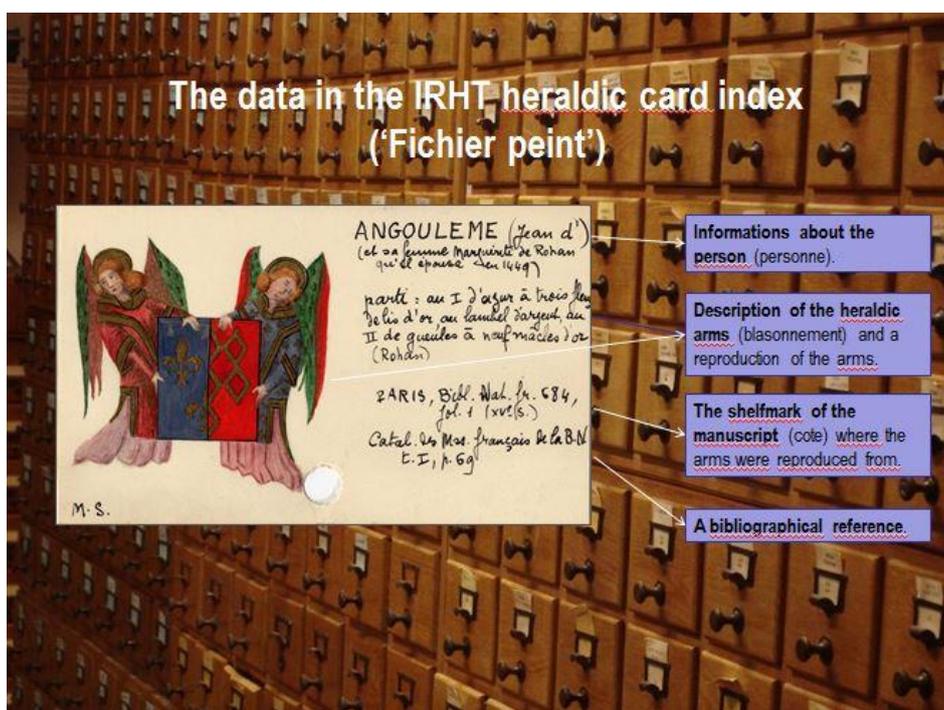- bindings ("reliures")

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[7] http://bibale.irht.cnrs.fr/index.html

- texts: BIBALE distinguishes "unités textuelles", that is the texts as they appear in the manuscripts, from
- works ("œuvres"), standardised versions of the texts as they have been defined in repertories and as they have been published in modern critical editions.

These seven main objects are linked between each other by associations ("associations") that have properties themselves: for an association between a text and its author or between a manuscript and its owner, or its annotator (or its thief!), a date can be specified, a place, a commentary and a level of certainty, meaning that it can be certain, doubtful or even rejected. (As you all know an association between a manuscript and an owner can be proposed by a scholar, but rejected subsequently by others, and we can show that in the database.)
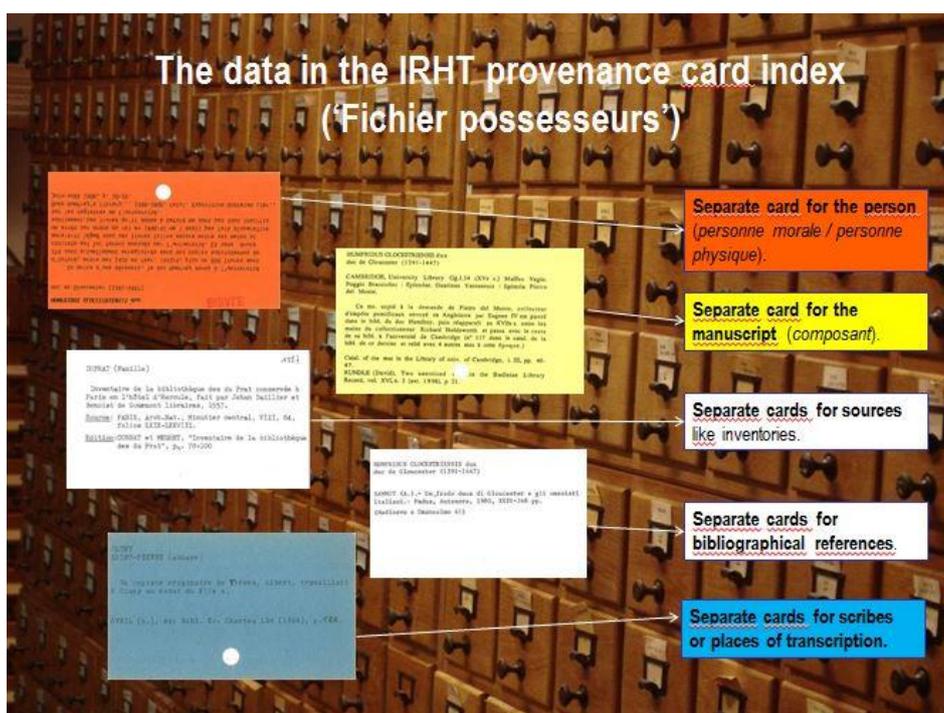
So far about the structure of BIBALE[8]

This database has been launched in April 2014. We have been entering data since two or three years but the amount of data is still limited. Presently the strong points are:

- Heraldry: most of the data from the 5200 cards from the heraldic card index at our institute ("Fichier peint") have been transferred into BIBALE. Thus especially many sources have been created (especially arms, but also some emblems and devices), linked to the corresponding persons (mainly individuals) and manuscripts. Moreover, the original cards have been reproduced and added as images to the files of the sources.

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[8] http://bibale.irht.cnrs.fr/guide.html

The other source, which is and especially will become the main one, is the IRHT provenance card index. From there we have been entering in the database especially several ensembles:

- Dominican libraries of Southern-France: especially the convent in Toulouse (including codicological and textual descriptions of 150 manuscripts) and of Avignon;
- Several other larger collections of institutions , individuals or families:
    - the bibliophile Bouhier family from Burgundy,
    - the Abbey of Cluny,
    - the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris,
    - the 16th century humanist Claude Dupuy,
    - the 15th century Brabant nobleman Philippe de Horn,
    - the Rochechouart Family,
    - the Bergues-Glymes Family,
    - the 15th century English Prince Humphrey of Gloucester.
- Many other smaller collections or single manuscripts.

So what we are doing mainly at the moment now is entering the data from this IRHT card index on manuscript ownership. This card index has been built up between 1942 and 2005 at the IRHT and consists of some 350.000 cards. We are not sure up to what extend we will be able to transfer absolutely all the data in it, but we're doing our best. One of the challenges is of course that research goes on and information can and should be updated with new findings and references.
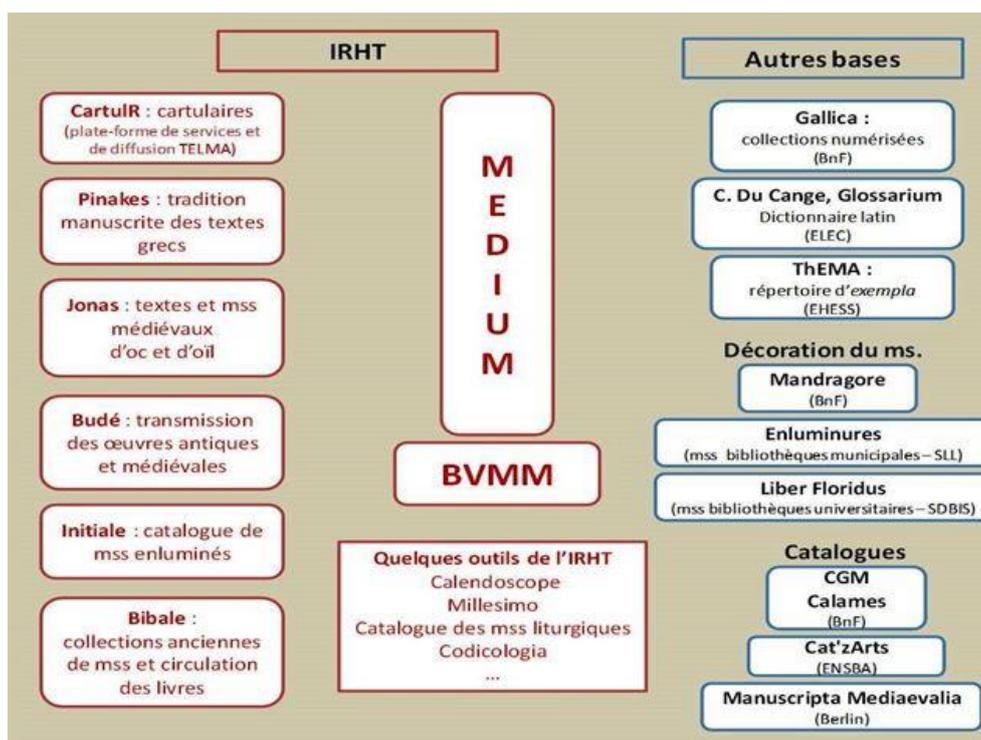
Current situation of BIBALE[9]

At this moment (8 September 2014) BIBALE describes:

- More than five thousand (5081) persons (individuals and institutions) with a thousand (1003) collections
- More than five thousand (5013) manuscripts (*composants*) with 155 bindings
- Almost seven thousand (6774) sources (mainly heraldic arms, ex-libris, inventories)
- 566 texts linked to 235 works.

This total of almost 19.000 objects is not bad for a start, but since our aim is very ambitious (theoretically describe all manuscripts, all collectors, all collections, all contents…) the database will only start to be of real importance when we will have, say, half of the cards in the IRHT provenance card index, which leads us to at least ten times more objects in the database. So it is a long term project…! As you see in the numbers, we focus on the persons, manuscripts and sources, whereas the part about the contents of the manuscripts, the texts is left aside a bit at the moment.

But, we're not alone!

This is the general idea. The general database about medieval manuscripts MEDIUM and the BVMM containing digitalized manuscripts from French public collections are in the centre. They are linked up on the one hand to other IRHT databases [on the left] and on the other hand with other web tools like the one's of the BNF's (GALLICA, MANDRAGORE) [at the right side] or elsewhere (MANUSCRIPTA MEDIAEVALIA) [at the bottom right].

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[9] http://bibale.irht.cnrs.fr/situation.html

MEDIUM[10]

MEDIUM is a repertory of manuscripts including

1) in the first place it contains all manuscripts for which the IRHT has photographs or digital reproductions (so you can use it simply in that way),
2) but in the second place it contains ever more manuscripts for which IRHT has prepared a link towards one of the other IRHT databases or to an external site.

- It contains an authoritative listing of shelf-marks and double shelf-marks.
- Searching by shelf-mark gives the best results. One should be aware that it is a database without much additional information, so other criteria are often partial or unverified.
- Please note that the names of cities are written in the language of their country (so type Wien for Vienna, Kobenhavn for Copenhagen, and Warszawa for Warsaw).

MEDIUM has a lot of possibilities to search further, but, inevitably, all queries are limited by the amount of data that is present in the database.

Example of a query:
- all manuscripts kept in Poland ?
  - Result: 216 manuscripts
- all manuscripts kept in Poland for which other links are available ?
  - 26 manuscripts
  - some of these contain links to the digital library POLONA
  - some of these have a link to JONAS

JONAS[11]

Catalogue of French manuscripts worldwide, searchable by author, title and shelf-mark (includes textual tradition and bibliography).

Example of a query:
- all manuscripts in Warsaw ?
  - Result: 3 manuscripts
  - the third manuscript is a Roman de la rose
  - clicking on it gives us a long list of manuscript and bibliography

INITIALE[12]

Art-historical analysis of the decoration of manuscripts and illuminated incunables.

In this database the corpus is restricted to manuscripts kept in French public collections except for the BNF. Therefore a search related to manuscripts kept in Poland does not work.

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[10] http://medium.irht.cnrs.fr/
[11] http://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr/
[12] http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/

For queries: use the index button next to the fields !

Example of a query with a text:
- "Roman de la rose"
  - Result: 23 manuscripts, one can look to the descriptions and the pictures

The great thing about INITIALE is the refined iconographic index. One can search for a certain subject, via the "Decoration" and then "Thésaurus" or "Index"

INITIALE is available, but is going to be fully renewed soon and the section responsible for it is working on that currently.

BVMM[13]
The BVMM is the virtual library of medieval manuscripts in French public collections. It contains reproductions of a large selection of medieval and early Renaissance manuscripts.

- Not all French libraries are available, but many and their number is regularly increasing.
- Some manuscripts have reproductions only of their decorated folios, some are fully digitised, some have digitisations of microfilms.
- The easiest search is by library and then by shelfmark. Thus one can easily see what manuscripts are included.
- If you look for manuscripts with certain characteristics, one should access via other databases. Because the various databases are linked with each other and we are working on more and more links.

Example of a query:
- Amiens: only decorated folios available
- Albi: digitisations available

We already saw some of these links in MEDIUM.

BIBALE[14]

In BIBALE we also add links when we can.
Every manuscript file (composant) is automatically linked to the corresponding MEDIUM file.

The consultation for the public of BIBALE has for the moment only a very limited number of entries, but that will be extended once the amount of data in the database will be larger.

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[13] http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/
[14] http://bibale.irht.cnrs.fr/

A research tool of BIBALE[15]

One can do queries by

- person: name
- source: type of source and then one can choose a type (e.g. type "Héraldique / armoiries" and then "Blasonnement" to search for words in the heraldic description of the arms)
- shelfmark: either by the three fields linked to MEDIUM (town, institution, shelfmark) or by a fourth field "Référence abrégée, to be used for manuscripts without a shelfmark, for instance a sales catalogue number or an inventory number)

Example of a query:
Person name: Humphrey of Gloucester.

Via the associations, one can click from file to file, for instance from the person to the collection to one of his manuscripts and to a source about it.

One of Humfrey of Gloucester's manuscripts is: Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.
In this file we see also additional links to:

- the corresponding MEDIUM file,
- GALLICA (the digitization of the manuscript),
- JONAS (a textual description and more bibliographical references),
- a file in the EUROPEANA REGIA project.

We could have accessed the same manuscript through MEDIUM and we would have found several other links: to the BVMM, INITIALE and to CALAMES.

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[15] http://bibale.irht.cnrs.fr/php/bibale.php?PLACE=SEARCH1&SPLACE=SEARCH1&SESSIONID