

# EARLY ARABIC PRINTED BOOKS

## FROM THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Explore four centuries of Arabic printed works in this fully text-searchable online archive.

**TOTAL  
PAGES:**

2.2 million

**TOTAL  
TITLES:**

5,540 books  
plus 31  
periodicals

**DATE  
COVERAGE:**

15th to 19th  
century



# BRINGING A WEALTH OF BENEFITS TO LIBRARIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND WORLDWIDE

This online archive is an essential resource for every library in the Middle East seeking access to pre-eminent heritage collections to advance scholarly research into the region's remarkable cultural, scientific, and intellectual past for local students, researchers, and communities.

The collection is indispensable for research libraries worldwide seeking to enhance teaching, learning and research programs with 24/7 access to such an extensive collection which includes rare Arabic primary sources.

For scholars, the collection's value lies in its provenance, breadth and inclusion of both Arabic texts and early European translations of Arabic texts enabling the study of the complex interchange between the Arabic and European world across the centuries.

This collection enriches the study of the Middle East and the Muslim world, generates new paths of enquiry and research, and develops students' confidence in reading and interpreting primary sources of Arabic language and literature.

## Supporting multiple disciplines and areas of study

Published in parts by subject, *Early Arabic Printed Books from the British Library* covers an extensive range of topics which bring the wealth and breadth of Arabic culture to scholars worldwide and support inter-disciplinary approaches to teaching, learning and research.

### These parts are:

- Literature, Grammar, Language, Catalogues, and Periodicals
- Sciences, History and Geography
- Religion and Law

### Languages included:

Arabic\*, Dutch\*, English\*, French\*, German\*, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian\*, Latin\*, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Spanish\*, Syriac and 17 others (\* full-text searchable)

### Major printing centres:

Beirut, Būlāq in Cairo, Delhi, Istanbul, London, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Paris among many others

# AN ENHANCED PLATFORM

Gale's commitment to the accessibility of digitised historical documents is second to none. New core enhancements to the Gale Primary Sources platform streamline the discovery of meaningful search results across tens of millions of pages.

Researchers expect the powerful core features of Gale Primary Sources. They include analysis tools, embedded image viewer, deep content tagging, and optical character recognition (OCR) output. Its tools and features include:

**TERM FREQUENCY:** The term frequency tool aids researchers in tracking central themes and ideas. Researchers can now see the frequency of their search terms within a content set to begin assessing how individuals, events, and ideas interacted and developed over time.

**TOPIC FINDER:** The topic finder assists students in thoroughly developing their research topic. By identifying and organising frequently occurring themes, this tool reveals hidden relationships between search terms— helping users shape their research and integrate diverse content with relevant information.

**CROSS-SEARCH CAPABILITY:** Gale is undertaking a mammoth effort to migrate each of its archives to a unified environment that supports dynamic search, among other powerful benefits. The result? Your institution can offer new research possibilities with unsurpassed relevance on a cohesive interface.

## **Additional enhancements exclusive to the *Early Arabic Printed Books* collection:**

- An Arabic virtual keyboard at every search box.
- A complete and selectable Arabic-language User Interface with right-to-left text and navigation to fully meet the research needs of Arabic speakers.

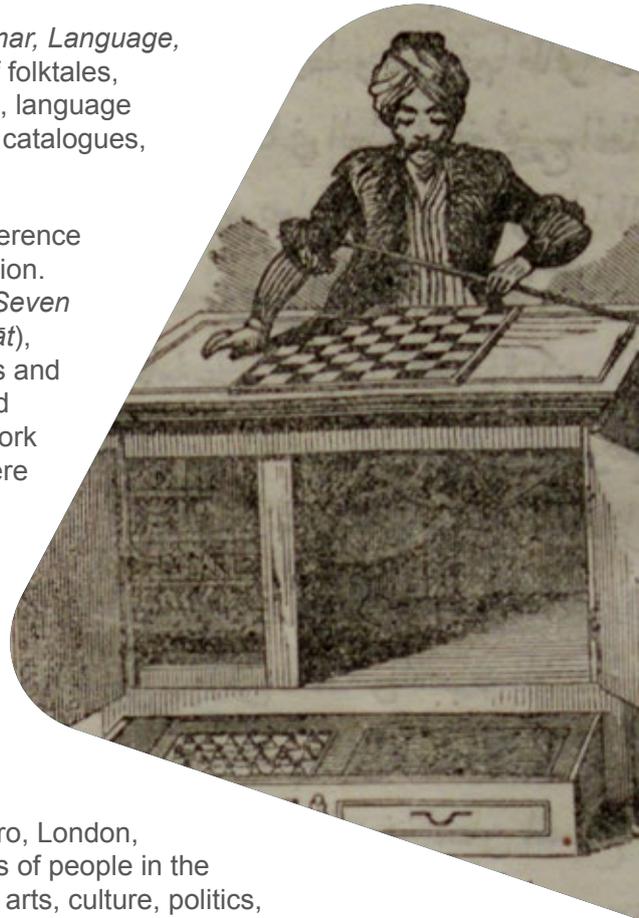
# LITERATURE, GRAMMAR, LANGUAGE, CATALOGUES AND PERIODICALS

*Early Arabic Printed Books from the British Library: Literature, Grammar, Language, Catalogues, and Periodicals* showcases early Arabic printed books of folktales, pre-Islamic literature, Islamic poetry and prose, proverbs and sayings, language and lexicography, dictionaries, grammar, syntax, rhetoric, manuscript catalogues, and periodicals.

Poetry was the most favoured literary form of the Arabic world, a preference that is reflected in the over 400 works of poetry included in the collection. These texts include many collections of Diwan poetry, including *The Seven Odes (al-Mu'allaqāt)*, *The Examination of al-Mufaḍḍal (al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt)*, *The Romance of Banu Hilāl*, *Luqman's Fables*, and many other works and collections in Arabic and translated into English, French, German, and other languages. However, internationally, the most famous literary work was *Alf layla wa-layla* or *One Thousand and One Nights*, of which there are nine editions in Arabic including the Calcutta 1814-18 edition, 28 editions in English translation, 13 in French, 6 in German, and 39 editions of selections in various languages.

The collection includes over 130 works of grammar and over 100 lexical works critical for studying linguistics and language, as well as 175 biographies and catalogues, including 19th-century collections of Arabic and other 'Oriental' manuscripts in libraries across Europe and the Middle East.

Finally, 31 19th-century periodicals, the majority printed in Beirut, Cairo, London, and Paris, provide insight into the cultural, intellectual, and social lives of people in the Middle East. These periodicals range from general weeklies covering arts, culture, politics, commerce and science to literary monthlies, specialist medical magazines, orientalist serials, and the Egyptian daily, *El-Qahira*. The earliest included periodical is the *al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣriyah*, the official gazette of the Egyptian government, printed in Būlāq from 1829.



## A Look at: Arabian Nights' Entertainments (ألف ليلة وليلة, *Alf layla wa-layla*)



Repeatedly printed for centuries, *Arabian Nights' Entertainment* is an English language edition of *One Thousand and One Nights*, one of the most recognisable stories known worldwide with roots in Arabia. The module contains over 120 editions of this seminal work in many languages, each with nuanced but noticeable differences from the earliest translated edition of 1712 (pictured) to the latest Arabic edition of 1888.

Galland, Antoine, translator. *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. 2nd ed., vol. 3, Andrew Bell, 1712. Early Arabic Printed Books-BL: Literature, Grammar, Language, Catalogues and Periodicals, <https://link.dev.ggtest.com/apps/doc/WUBFHV959687208/EAPB?u=omni&sid=bookmark-EAPB&xid=4c684bbf&pg=1&xy=0pen>. Accessed 1 Feb. 2023.



# SCIENCE & HISTORY

*Early Arabic Printed Books from the British Library: Sciences, History, and Geography* presents the range of Arab learning that influenced European scholarship through the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. It features works on medicine and physiology, classical sciences, mathematics, astrology, chemistry, natural history, philosophy, logic and ethics, politics, history and genealogy, biography, travel, geography, and topography.

The largest group of scientific texts are the over 300 works on medicine and physiology, including many editions of Ibn Sīnā's *The Canon of Medicine* (*al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb*) from the Weidenbach 1470 Latin printing and the 1593 Rome edition in Arabic. There are 90 works on astronomy and astrology, 74 on mathematics, 53 on alchemy, over 200 on philosophy and nearly 300 on ethics. Works by all the great Arab scientists include al-Haytham, al-Fārābī, and al-Battānī.

The collection includes around 400 different historical works as well as over 200 histories in biographical form. These range from printings of works written

in the 9th and 10th centuries such as al-Wāqidī's *Conquest of Syria (Futūḥ al-Shām)*, the biographic *Book of the Major Classes (Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr)* of Ibn Sa'd, the *Genealogies of the Nobles (Ansāb al-ashrāf)* of al-Balā dhurī and the *Meadows of Gold (Murūj al-dhahab)* of al-Mas'ūdī. From the 13th to 15th centuries are editions of the *Brief History of Man (Al-Mukhtaṣar fī ta'rīkh al-bashar)* by Abū al-Fidā, 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athīr's *the Complete History (Ta'rīkh al-kāmil)*, Ibn Khaldūn's *Book of Lessons (Kitāb al-'Ibar)* and the *Prolegomena (Muqaddima)*. Representative of the 19th century is the histories of Rifa'a Rāfi' al-Tahtāwī.

Works of geography and travel writing provide insight into the economic and intellectual orbit of the inhabitants of the Islamic world and include many major works such as the *Book of the Marvels of India (Kitāb 'Ajā'ib al-Hind)*, al-Mas'udi's *Book of Notification and Verification (Kitāb al-tanbih wa-al-ishrāf)*, the *Tabula Rogeriana (Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq)* of Ibn Muḥammad al-Idrīsī and the administrative compendium, *Masālik al-abṣār*, of Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī.

## A Look at: Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) also known to Western scholars as Avicenna, ابن سينا

Regarded as one of the most brilliant polymaths of his age, Ibn Sīnā's many writings on philosophy, physics, and astronomy still survive today, including two of his most influential works, *The Book of Healing (Kitāb al-Shifā)* and *The Canon of Medicine (al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb)*. There are three Arabic language editions of the latter text as well as the translation into Latin by Gerard of Cremona, and Averroes's commentary on the work.



Avicenna, القانون في الطب [al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb]. Typographia Medicea, 1593. Early Arabic Printed Books-BL: Science and History, <https://link.dev.ggtest.com/apps/doc/DOLLJJ371591470/EAPB?u=omni&sid=bookmark-EAPB&xid=c534cd2b&pg=1&xty=open>. Accessed 8 Feb. 2023.

# RELIGION & LAW

*Early Arabic Printed Books from the British Library: Religion and Law* is an archive of early Arabic printed books on Islamic literature, traditions (hadith), works of the religious life, and Islamic law texts such as fiqh, statutes, and rulings.

Islamic literature includes editions of the *Qur'an* and commentaries, Hadith, doctrine, and Sufism. Central are the over 50 *Qur'an* printed in Arabic script dating from 1694 to 1890, highlights of which are the 1694 Hamburg edition, an 1830 Shiraz edition, an 1832 Kazan edition, an 1834 Leipzig edition, Būlāq editions of 1864 with a commentary by scholar al-Zamakhsharī and 1867 with writings attributed to the poet and philosopher Ibn Al-'Arabī, as well as many editions printed in India from the 1830s onwards. There are nine editions in Arabic, Hindustani, and Persian, and bilingual Arabic editions in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindustani, Latin, Persian, Sindi, Tamil and Turkish.

Arabic commentaries on the *Qur'an* include those by the great names in early exegesis, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, al-Razi, al-Zamakhshari, Zakariyyā al-Ansārī, al-Suyūfī, Adb Allāh ibn 'Umar Bayḍāwī and ibn Kathir.

**Disclaimer:** This is a historical collection of a wide range of works published over 400 years, from the 15th to 19th centuries. The collection is intended for historical research purposes. The views expressed in these books are those of the original authors, editors and translators, and do not necessarily represent the views of Gale, Cengage Learning or the British Library.

In addition to the many Sunni and Shi'a works of hadith and doctrine, there are over 80 Sufi texts by authors such as Ibn al-'Arabī, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān Balkhī, al-Ghazzālī, Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān Jazūlī and 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Ahmad Sha'rānī.

On law, the collection contains many works of Hanafi law, including numerous works by Abū Ḥanīfa such as editions of *The Greater Knowledge (al-Fiqh al-akbār)* and *The Will (al-Waṣīyyat)*, or his disciple Muḥammad al-Shaybānī's *al-Hujaj*. Works of Maliki law including those of Mālik ibn Anas, over 40 works of Shāfi'ī Law, and a similar number of Shī'ah law including *Sharā'ī al-Islām* by Najm al-Din al-Hillī, as well as editions of the *Muntaha al-makāl* by Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl Abu 'Alī.



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