

PRESENTATION

The Martin Bodmer Foundation

Created in 1971, the Foundation is a library and museum which houses and exhibits some of the greatest literary texts from around the world and throughout human history.

This unique place bears witness to human thought, from the dawn of writing through to the modern day- which is why it is considered one of the most beautiful private collections in the world.

The Martin Bodmer Foundation is home to around 150,000 documents in almost 120 different languages. There are hundreds of papyruses, medieval manuscripts from both east and west, thousands of signed pages and rare engravings. The collection includes one of only 48 copies of the Gutenberg Bible left in the world; the oldest complete version of one of the Gospels (Saint John); first editions by Shakespeare, Molière, Lope de Vega; Flavius Josephus' manuscripts; Egyptian Books of the Dead; Luther's theses; and documents signed by Mozart, Beethoven, Napoleon and Borges. Since 2015, the so-called "Biblioteca Bodmeriana" has been registered with the UNESCO Memory of the World programme, an initiative to protect the world's documentary heritage.



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The main aim of the Foundation is to reflect "the adventure of the human spirit" by continuing the work of its creator, collector Martin Bodmer (1899-1971), who committed himself to setting up a "library of world literature" (Weltliteratur). The Foundation achieves this by inviting its visitors to a setting which defies comparison, overlooking Lake Geneva and the city of Geneva from the hillside of Cologny, and into its modern underground museum designed by the great Swiss architect, Mario Botta.

On top of a permanent collection made up of veritable literary jewels that have left their mark on both literature and human history, the Martin Bodmer Foundation also organises temporary exhibitions on topics such as science, the arts, history and literature. As part of its work, the Foundation has collaborated with internationally renowned cultural institutions such as the National Library of France, the BML (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana) library in Florence, the British Library in London, and the Morgan Library and Museum in New York.

The Martin Bodmer Foundation takes part in various projects to digitalise documents so that they can be put online. On the one hand, this process better preserves the documents, as having digital versions avoids handling of the originals. On the other hand, it also guarantees better cultural dissemination, as the digital versions can be consulted online from anywhere in the world. The Foundation also serves as a research hub, welcoming international researchers to consult the Foundation's documents, and in doing so facilitating access to material which would otherwise be difficult to view.



Introductory video (in French): <https://bit.ly/2QSatOj>

For information, interviews, patronage or sponsorship:

Patricia Galve

Communication and Partnerships Manager

pgalve@fondationbodmer.ch

+41 22 707 44 50

