



# MELA NOTES

Middle East Librarians Association

Number 90 (2017)

**MELA NOTES**  
**Journal of Middle Eastern Librarianship**  
**Number 90 (2017)**

ISSN 0364-2410

PUBLISHED BY THE MIDDLE EAST LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION

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*MELA Notes* is published once a year. It is distributed to members of the Association and subscribers. Membership dues of US \$30.00 bring the *Notes* and other mailings. Subscriptions are US \$30.00 per calendar year, or US \$16.00 per issue for most back numbers.

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# MELA NOTES

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2017

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**Cooperating to Build a National Collection of Middle East  
Serials:  
Library of Congress, Cairo Overseas Office**

WILLIAM J. KOPYCKI  
AHMED MOSTAFA EL-SAYED MOSTAFA  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS—CAIRO

Despite beginning its life in January 1962 as the “American Book Procurement Program” for the Middle East, the Library of Congress’ Cairo Overseas Office has always considered serials, including newspapers, magazines, and academic journals, as a key format in its cooperative acquisition programs. The labor and effort of acquiring these serials is for the benefit of both the Library of Congress and other U.S.-based academic and research libraries forming what is currently known as the Middle East Cooperative Acquisitions Programs (MECAP).

By the time the Cairo Office opened, funding to acquire and pay for library materials was done through the PL-480 program, or more specifically, United States Public Law 83-480, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. One may wonder what agriculture has to do with book trade, but PL-480 was the law that allowed the United States to sell agricultural products (like wheat) to foreign countries, who would in return pay debts for these not in dollars but in local currency, some of which was used to acquire books and serials for U.S. libraries. By 1963 some 20 libraries were participating in the Cairo Office’s program, regularly receiving library materials. The PL-480 program came to an end in 1979, when it morphed into what is called Cooperative Acquisitions Programs (CAP), and hence for the Middle East, MECAP.

The Cairo Office is presently located in the U.S. Embassy in Garden City. It is staffed by an American field director and over 30

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A slightly different version of this topic was presented by the authors at the 2016 MELA Meeting in Boston, MA. Questions can be directed to [wkopycki@loc.gov](mailto:wkopycki@loc.gov).

foreign service nationals. Back in 1962, the Cairo Office acquired its publications from two countries, Cairo and Lebanon, and eventually expanded operations to cover 22 countries in the region. At present there are more than 40 participating libraries in our MECAP program.

From the beginning, serials and newspapers were a primary format worth acquiring, and several participants and the Cairo Office sent newspapers on a regular basis to the Library and some of the PL-480 participant libraries. Key newspapers such as *al-Ahram*, *al-Akhbar* (Egypt), and *al-Anwar* (Lebanon) were sent in regular bundles, and even minority press publications such as *Houssaper* (Egypt, in Armenian) and *Phos* (Egypt, in Greek) were actively collected and sent in a systematic way.

Acquiring serials from the Middle East/North Africa region is a challenge on many levels. Newspapers and magazines may be heavily subsidized, making distribution outside the country of publication an untenable expense. Even distribution within the country may be limited, and the number of print copies available small. Irregularities in academic journals, due to budget, changes in editorship, or changes in institutional affiliation are also a factor, not to mention censorship and suspension operations. At the national level, serial distribution companies are wanting, and at the regional level, with services expected of an EBSCO or Coutts, utterly nonexistent. And even among commercial vendors who otherwise supply U.S. academic libraries with library materials, few if any are able to supply serials on a comprehensive and systematic basis due to high costs to acquire and manage them.

This article will look at the role of the Library of Congress' Cairo Overseas Office in building the national serials collection for libraries in the United States. Specifically the following points will be addressed:

1. The nature of serials production in the countries of the Middle East/North Africa (economic and publishing issues).
2. The trials and tribulations of acquiring serials comprehensively and for multiple MECAP participants, whether through its network of bibliographic representatives and suppliers or through acquisitions trips.

3. Statistics and trends in collecting among Library of Congress and MECAP library participants.
4. The Library of Congress' interface with other cooperative projects to make information about serials and holdings available.

### **The Nature of Serials Production in the Countries of the Middle East/North Africa**

There are a number of complex problems involved with serials acquisition work, and most of this has to do with the nature of publishing in general, and specific problems that are part-and-parcel of the publishing industry here in the region in particular. Because of the lack of a real internal distribution network, office staff must regularly follow up with the supplier, publisher, or association directly to ensure that new issues are acquired, with no missing issues or gaps. The strength of a library's serial collection is in its completeness.

At the anecdotal level, it is a challenge to find commercial vendors in the region who are specialized or even willing to supply serials to a library, even on the scale of the Library of Congress, on a regular basis because of the high costs of managing and following up on subscriptions and number of copies. From a business perspective, the profit margin is very thin for a commercial supplier, and the high cost of managing this work does not always yield the expected profit. This means that when commercial suppliers are unavailable, one must work with individuals who are self-motivated or who can otherwise complete their work as complementary to another existing job they hold. For example, someone whose day job is visiting different cultural institutions or organizations within a country on a regular basis can supplement this work by supplying libraries with serial titles acquired during such visits. In this way, time and effort can be saved, with benefit for libraries interested in regular acquisition of serials.

The following sections discuss some of the other challenges that the Cairo Office faces when acquiring serials.

### **Availability and Means of Acquiring**

The office uses a network of suppliers and bibliographic representatives. Channels of acquiring serials could be through



distributers, bookshops, book fairs, and even small kiosks. In the case of the latter, all that can be usually found is the latest issue of that particular serial title. If you visit the publisher direct, it may be possible to find additional back issues, but this all depends on what the publisher has in stock, and this stock is sometimes in a locked closet with only one person having the key. If for whatever reason that key holder is not available, you may have to make a special visit another time.

Sometimes publishers themselves delay printing a new issue of an academic journal due to lack of articles or content. The publications of NIDOC (National Information and Documentation Center) in Egypt are but one example of where editorial decisions can be made to not publish a new issue of a publication until a sufficient quota of content has been received and accepted.

In many countries, pre-paid subscriptions can be considered a good and reliable way to acquire serials with complete runs on a regular basis. This is especially so for a local contractor. For example, Egypt, Oman, Qatar, and other countries have a national distribution agency where it is possible to place pre-paid subscriptions to cover the major newspapers and magazines. However, in the Middle East/North Africa this is not the case all the time because there are many uncontrollable political and economic factors that may affect the publishing scheme for a certain titles and may delay or reduce the number of expected issues per year. Titles may be intended to be published six times a year but the reality is only one issue could be published of it, and then it may not be possible to be credited for the remaining issues. This is the deficiency of the distribution agency who may or may not be able to process at a sophisticated level.

Pre-paid subscriptions do not always yield the desired results. For example, in Kuwait, we encouraged our vendor to place such subscriptions with the understanding that he would be able to receive these titles with minimal effort. What actually happened is that not all the issues of a title arrived, and thus the vendor had to make several phone calls to publishers to find out what happened to the missing issues and how they could be sent or otherwise get back into the authorized distribution channel. The cost and time of the vendor to do claims is not always worth the meagre profit to be made from serials titles, and particularly in Kuwait, the cost of a taxi to move from place to place for the sake of a few issues may be prohibitive.

With regards to the Cairo Office, it is worth mentioning that out of 498 commercial serial titles from Egypt we have prepaid subscriptions to only 166, and this is the highest number of prepaid subscriptions from any one country. Out of 80 commercial serial titles from Syria we have prepaid subscriptions to only 14; out of 342 commercial serial titles from Turkey we have prepaid subscriptions to only 52. As for the rest of the countries, we may have only one or two prepaid subscriptions from each country.

The implication of this is that the remaining titles must be acquired on an issue-by-issue basis, and this requires that a local contractor make regular visits to be assured of acquiring enough copies. If visits cannot be made on a regular basis, then the publisher must be willing to hold several issues (and an appropriate number of copies) to be acquired by the contractor on a subsequent visit. In the case of acquisition trips abroad, staff must try to acquire entire runs that have come out since the last time such a trip was made to that location.

**Book fairs** are always a good opportunity to gather many commercial, government, academic and non-government institutions in order for them to offer their publications. Unlike books, serials may not always be available for sale (display copies only), or else they may have only the current and one back issue. Examples from Algeria include *Majallat al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* and *Majallat al-Majma' al-Jaza'iri lil-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah*, as well as certain titles published in the Amazigh language. Such publications are free when you visit their publishers' stands at book fairs. If you have missing or back issues to acquire, you may need to visit their headquarters. In some cases, and even after visiting, you may not be allowed to take everything you need or else you may only take samples from certain issues. Another example is the Algerian Statistical Department: they offer their statistical sets for sale to the public; however, these same publications may be available on their website. Even if you visit their offices they may have a limited number of print copies available or refuse to give you certain titles. They may also tell you in an informal way that you can access what you like from their website, but in the case of Library of Congress we are required to have signed authorization forms for copyright clearance purposes. The administrative realities of government entities in the region is such that to get an official signature on something requires additional

effort and permissions on both sides, something that it may not be possible to accomplish in the span of a short acquisitions trip!

**Serials distribution in Morocco** is very unique and different from other countries covered by the Cairo Office. In most countries it is common to find recent materials in book shops, and among the publishers and distributors themselves; in Morocco, newspaper kiosks and stalls play a significant role in offering new serials (and monographs), even offering academic, government, and private sector publications. In addition, each kiosk has slightly different offerings, meaning that one has to search a number of them to ensure that comprehensive coverage is achieved.

### Scanning the Market to Locate/Identify New Serials

Not all vendors or contractors like to locate and offer new serial titles, simply because for them it means additional challenges. Some of our suppliers have the capacity to do this and others simply do not. This requires Cairo Office staff to make regular “virtual scans” of the market, via web surfing, monitoring cultural and political groups on social media like Facebook, reviewing references and advertisements in other local publications, etc. We also rely on recommendations from MECAP participants, some of whom inform us of a new title. Once a new serial title is identified, then a sample copy has to be acquired for evaluation and selection decision. This procedure takes place on a country-by-country basis every two years or so, depending on what is being received and how frequently.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
New serial titles	351	374	273	265	183	286
Active commercial serials	3425	3396	3459	3535	3491	3073
Active exchange serials	938	987	1082	1043	1011	944

**Fig. 1. New serial titles acquired by the Cairo Office 2011–2016.**

Note: an active serial title is one where at least one issue has been published in the last five years.

Other factors that may affect the publishing sector in general and the serials publishing sector in particular:

**Political Status**

Following different political developments, notably in those countries affected by the “Arab Spring” (2011–2013), there were short bursts of renewed publishing activity as new political parties were formed and independent publishing appeared in the wake of state-sponsored organs whose status or outright existence dropped. Libya in 2012 saw no less than 200 new serial titles published in the short period of a few months. Many of these stopped as quickly as they began. Thus it is important from a selection viewpoint to use good judgement and let the test of time determine what titles will be selected for the long term in a collection. The total number of active commercial serial titles we are receiving from Libya is now 172.

Governments also play a role in serials publishing, as state orders to suspend or close a journal may be enacted. For example, in 2015 in Bahrain, all publications from Shi‘ite associations were banned and halted from further printing and distribution.

**Economic Conditions**

A growing trend in the Gulf States is that as a result of changing economic conditions, some government ministries and institutions have been asked to reduce their budgets. This has had an impact on their ability to purchase paper and print physical copies. As a result, their publications stop being available for sale, or else are available online only. In short, once this happens it is not possible to rely solely on the source institution as a means to acquire on a regular basis. Examples of this include government entities in Bahrain and Algeria, including but not limited to statistical bureaus, central banks, and even national universities.

**Statistics and Trends in Collecting among Library of Congress  
and MECAP Library Participants**

Country Of Publication	2001		2016	
	LC	MECAP	LC	MECAP
Algeria	11		100	62
Bahrain	39	13	33	14
Cyprus	10	9	3	
Egypt	378	257	453	221
France	2	2	2	3
Iraq	18		127	30
Israel	33	12	16	
Jordan	128	61	191	55
Kurdish			136	3
Kuwait	99	34	92	25
Lebanon	135	77	147	79
Libya	37	19	148	68
Mauritania	27	8	58	15
Morocco	110	50	216	75
Oman	42	6	54	44
Qatar	47	3	23	13
Saudi Arabia	163	60	171	60
Sudan	51	27	154	88
Syria	85	55	70	35
Tunisia	59	41	101	81
Turkey	239	13	331	13
U.A.E.	277	25	186	55
U.K.	23	8	23	6
West Bank	61	29	28	5
Yemen	56	9	69	46
USA	1	1	1	1
Greece	2	3		
Chad			1	

Netherlands			1	
North Cyprus			11	
Sweden			2	

**Fig. 2. Number of serial titles acquired for Library of Congress and MECAP participants, 2001 and 2016.**

In Figure 2 we can get a comparative sense of the distribution of titles acquired commercially by the Cairo Office for the Library of Congress and MECAP participants by country, comparing the situation in 2001 with that of 2016. For example, the coverage of Algeria back in 2001 was perhaps sparse, with 11 titles for LC and zero titles being acquired by MECAP participants. For Iraq (and to a certain degree, Kurdish serial titles, which are produced mostly in Iraq), there were very few being acquired by the Cairo Office back in 2001, and this is certainly due to the fact that the sanctions against Iraq made the acquisition of most serial titles, especially newspapers, impossible at that time. Fast forward to 2016, and we can see this number has increased significantly. Other countries have also increased, meaning that when we look at the trend overall between the Library of Congress and MECAP participants, there is a far greater number of serials available in U.S. libraries than ever before.

It is also worth mentioning that this chart considers only what is being acquired by the Cairo Office for MECAP participants, recognizing that several U.S. libraries use multiple sources, including different or even common commercial suppliers, so these are not included in these figures. Because of this, we cannot make an initial analysis of how many titles may be “unique” across libraries in North America. This may be an opportunity for the future, if other libraries are willing to share their data.

### **The Library of Congress’ Interface with Other Cooperative Projects to Make Information about Serials and Holdings Available: Current Challenges and Future Opportunities**

Outside the context of MECAP, the Cairo Office also serves as the main center for Middle East serials cataloging for the Library of Congress, sharing its production with the world. Since 2008, the Serials Section staff in the Cairo Office has been granted full independence by Washington to contribute shelf-ready original

cataloging for serial titles acquired by the office. In 2014 staff achieved independence to apply RDA cataloging rules. The serials section performs all the cataloging first in OCLC's WorldCat, after which these records are migrated into the Library of Congress' online catalog. By working in OCLC's WorldCat, this ensures that libraries the world over have access and can benefit from the original bibliographic data created by our staff. On the average, Cairo Office serial catalogers create 250–300 new serial title records per year.

If making bibliographical information available to the world is one part of the puzzle, then updated holdings information is the second part. Cairo Office staff spend a considerable amount of time updating holdings information live in the Library's online catalog, performing serial check-in for all serials titles being sent to LC's Law Library and for Western/Turkish titles for other divisions in the Library, using Voyager's check-in module. This enables users of the Library's online catalog to know what the exact holdings are of a particular serial title. It should be noted that staffing and technical limitations currently prevent the Cairo Office from doing check-in for all its serials; however, there are local systems in place to know exactly what has been received for the Library. The holdings information can be used to confirm that new issues of a particular serial title have been published, or to determine to what extent the Library holds a given title.

Description	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Law Titles (all languages)</b>	3,490	3,715	5,012	3,977	2,829	2,776
<b>SCUs (Western languages)</b>	893	588	999	800	1,426	1,415
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,383</b>	<b>4,303</b>	<b>6,011</b>	<b>4,797</b>	<b>4,255</b>	<b>4,191</b>

**Fig. 3. Cairo Office serial check-in activities by # of issues.**

An SCU is a collection of issues bound by the Library in a single unit.

### **Cooperation with National Projects: Middle East Materials Project**

The Cairo Office plays a supporting role within the context of the Middle East Materials Project (MEMP), administered by the Center for Research Libraries. For those not familiar with this project, MEMP works to preserve collections of unique, rare, or hard-to-obtain research materials for Middle East studies, with serials being one of the key formats preserved. Proposals are made by MEMP participants. The Library of Congress' representative from Washington serves as an ex-officio member of the Executive Board of MEMP, and is there to report on the activities of the nation's library as regards its microfilming activities, since the Library produces a high volume of microfilmed newspapers from the Middle East, done either through a contract company located in Pennsylvania, or else by the Overseas Office in Delhi. Thus, within the context of most serial preservation proposals that are brought before the MEMP Executive Board and membership, the first question that is usually asked is "Does the Library of Congress collect this particular title, and if so, is it being filmed?" Cairo Office staff, and specifically Ahmed, can answer the question by saying "Yes, Cairo Office is collecting this title and it is being filmed in Delhi," or "Yes, Cairo Office is collecting this title, but it is being sent to Washington. The latest issue acquired by Cairo Office is such and such, and it was sent to Washington on such and such date." This supporting information has proven to be very valuable to MEMP and can help with the decision-making process as to whether to accept or reject a proposal to avoid any possible duplication of effort.

In addition, the Cairo Office has also made efforts to contribute original proposals to MEMP. Most recently, MEMP approved a proposal submitted by the Cairo Office to film two sets of newspapers that were collected from Iraq following the 2003 war. These titles included several short-lived or less-established titles that hit the streets after 2003, representing the views of various political parties and organizations, giving a snapshot in time of the events on the ground. With MEMP agreeing to film these titles, the materials can now be made accessible to a potentially wider user base.



With all this in mind, we can understand that the active collection, processing, and preservation of serials from the Middle East remains a high priority of the Library of Congress, and by offering these services to MECAP participants, the national collection of these serial titles is all the richer and better.

## **Crossing Boundaries with Arabic Collections Online**

JUSTIN PARROTT

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY IN ABU DHABI

As librarians, researchers, and academics of the Middle East, our professional mission is to enhance our knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for the region, its people, and its cultures. Towards this end, the purpose of Arabic Collections Online (ACO) is to digitize and preserve historic Arabic-language materials and to provide this material to a global audience at no cost. ACO is the result of a pioneering collaboration of academic libraries and librarians, sponsored by New York University in Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), under the leadership of New York University (NYU), and in partnership with Columbia, Cornell, Princeton, the American University in Beirut, the American University in Cairo, and—as of November 2017—the National Archives of the United Arab Emirates. The project’s Advisory Board consists of established and accomplished scholars in the field from major institutions such as Yale, Oxford, UCLA, UNC, and Brown University.

Using state-of-the-art digitization techniques, ACO is preserving thousands of volumes from our partners’ distinguished library collections to meet the information needs of the international community, many of whom would otherwise be unable, or find it very difficult, to access these materials. All digital images are required to meet the standards of a high quality TIFF-6, uncompressed, sRGB embedded, 24-bit color (3 channels of 8-bit color), non-interpolated 400ppi resolution computer file, or otherwise conform to the University of Michigan Digitization Specs. Strict guidelines for quality control at each partner institution ensure that the final products are optimized for the web environment. Descriptive metadata must also conform to the MARC21 XML schema, as provided by the Library of Congress. Topics covered include a wide range of interests: fiction, poetry, literature, criticism, culture and society, economics, history, law, Arabic language and grammar, biographies, and Islamic studies.

ACO is important to the North American scholarly community because it protects relevant resources for future generations of researchers. Many of the aging books in our partners' collections are irreplaceable once they succumb to inevitable deterioration. As an Islamic studies researcher myself, I have made use of texts in ACO that are simply unavailable elsewhere. For example, *Aḥādīth al-ṣabāḥ fī al-midhyā'* (1947) documents the religious teachings of Sheikh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, the late Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, which were broadcast by radio in the early days of mass-media in Egypt. This book was never reprinted and exists in only a few libraries. Not only does the work contain expressions of Egyptian religious life during the mid-20th century, it may also be useful to scholars of communication and technology. Were it not for ACO, works such as these might eventually be lost to history.

What started out as a project to assist scholarly researchers quickly expanded to serve a broader community of users. About half of ACO's user community resides in Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East, notably Iraq and Syria, two countries enduring significant conflict and destruction of their libraries and heritage. Users in these countries benefit from ACO's content in ways that we have yet to fully grasp; however, these users write to us, expressing appreciation for the access to books and sometimes requesting more on specific subjects. Other researchers make use of ACO in Europe and North Africa, extending to Russia, Indonesia, South America, and Australia.

With its infrastructure and operations well established, ACO continues its professional and productive digitization of collections from partner libraries, adding thousands of new digitized books at regular intervals with a goal of reaching 20,000 volumes. Additionally, ACO continues to roll out upgrades to improve user interface and discovery features. Readers can view books in the online digital reader, or download them as high- or low-resolution PDF files for off-line viewing at their convenience.

For more information and to access content today, please visit the website at <http://dlib.nyu.edu/aco/> or simply Google "Arabic Collections Online."

## **The Role of Middle East Studies Librarians in Preserving Cultural Heritage Materials**

LAILA HUSSEIN MOUSTAFA  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Middle Eastern Studies librarians (MESL) have a long history of preserving and providing access to cultural heritage materials from and about the Middle East (ME).<sup>1</sup> Today, their work is more important than ever. Ongoing unrest and wars in the ME have resulted in the destruction of cultural heritage sites and materials. These events highlight the importance of librarians' work in collecting and digitizing cultural heritage materials to preserve the threatened history of the people of the ME.

Many libraries and archives in the ME were looted or destroyed in various countries. For example, in 2003, the war in Iraq resulted in violence, death, and the destruction of many libraries and archives. Iraq lost many of its irreplaceable books, journals, newspapers, manuscripts, and other cultural heritage materials. According to Saad Eskander, the director of the Iraq National Library, 60 percent of the library's Ottoman and royal Hashemite documents were lost and 25

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This article presents some of what Middle East Studies librarians have been collecting, preserving, and giving access to for many years. This topic is worthy of a book, which I hope to write in the future. I want to thank all MELA members who have worked for years to document the history of the Middle East Librarians Association, including Marlis J. Saleh, *MELA Notes* editor and the Middle East Studies librarian at the University of Chicago, and MELA webmaster, Justin Parrott at New York University in Abu Dhabi.

<sup>1</sup> It is hard to draw a line defining where the Middle East's borders start or end: The website of the professional organization Middle East Studies Association (MESA) adds Spain, India, and Central Asia to the Middle East, since Islamic civilization was long dominant in those areas.

percent of its books were looted or burned.<sup>2</sup> Many other materials, including old Quran and historical manuscripts, were looted or damaged. Sadly, many libraries and archives in the ME have suffered some sort of destruction because of unrest or war, including libraries and archives in Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and other countries. For instance, in 2011 during the Arab Spring revolution, the French Institute established by Napoleon Bonaparte in the late eighteenth century was burned during clashes between protesters and the military.

These threats to cultural heritage in the ME highlight the need for disaster management plans (DMP) in case of emergency. In previous research, I examined whether the national and academic libraries and archives in 19 ME countries were prepared with DMPs in the event of an emergency. I found that 84 out of the 86 libraries and archives that participated in the study reported they were working on writing a DMP.<sup>3</sup> Most of those institutions that did not have DMPs were repositories for important and unique archival materials, including ancient manuscripts, rare books, and ancient handwritten Qurans and other treasures. In light of the lack of institutional responses to disaster management planning, the work of individual librarians takes on greater importance. My goal is to highlight how MESL protect cultural heritage.

### **Middle Eastern Studies Librarians**

MESLs are subject specialists who have more than one master's degree, and have learned more than one spoken ME language, such as Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Turkish, Kurdish, or Amazigh. They have experience being in the ME region for study, research, collecting materials, attending workshops and conferences, or helping to establish libraries and train other librarians.

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<sup>2</sup> Jeff Spurr, "Indispensable yet Vulnerable: The Library in Dangerous Times: A Report on the Status of Iraqi Academic Libraries and a Survey of Efforts to Assist Them, with Historical Introduction," <https://oi-archive.uchicago.edu/OI/IRAQ/mela/indispensable.html>

<sup>3</sup> Laila Hussein Moustafa, "Endangered Culture Heritage: A Survey of Disaster Management Planning in Middle East Libraries and Archives," *Library Management* 36, nos. 6/7 (2015): 476–494. The survey was sent to 19 countries in the Middle East, including Iran, Afghanistan, and Israel.

The job of MESLs is to collect books and other materials from the ME and about the ME to support their institutional curricula and meet the current and future needs of researchers. They collect modern and historical materials covering a wide variety of subjects, including anthropology, literature, history, religion, arts, and cinema, in a wide variety of formats, including newspapers, maps, gray literature, microfilm, CDs, music records, manuscripts, and digital materials. They purchase the materials through vendors in the region or outside the ME. They also receive gift books and other materials from researchers, individuals, and institutes in the ME. They sometimes travel to the region to purchase materials from book fairs, such as those in Cairo, Qatar, Dubai, and Marrakesh.

### **Middle East Librarians Association**

Often the librarians work in collaboration with each other through their professional organization, the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA). MELA was established in 1972 by 17 librarians who were attending the sixth annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). At that time, MELA had 55 members, 20 professional and 35 associate members, representing about 45 institutes in 7 countries. By the year 2017, MELA's membership increased to 91 members from 21 countries.<sup>4</sup> The mission of MELA is:

...to facilitate communication among members through meetings and publications; to improve the quality of area librarianship through the development of standards for the profession and education of Middle East library specialists; to compile and disseminate information concerning Middle East libraries and collections and to represent the judgment of the members in matters affecting them; to encourage cooperation among members and Middle East libraries, especially in the acquisition of materials and the development of bibliographic control; to cooperate with other library and area organizations in projects of mutual concern and benefit; to promote research in and development

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<sup>4</sup> I want to thank William Kopycki, Secretary-Treasurer of MELA and the head of the Library of Congress-Cairo Office, for providing me with the membership number.

of indexing and automated techniques as applied to Middle East materials.<sup>5</sup>

The Middle East librarians contribute to the profession and work together to standardize the transliteration of Arabic, Persian, Ottoman, and other Middle East languages, as well as Syriac, Armenian, and other languages.

MELA librarians work constantly to collect historical materials and give access to them to their institutions' users and to other researchers around the world. They work individually, and with each other through their institutions, to share resources and digitize historical materials and put the materials online for users to view and download for free. Some MELA members are members of the Middle East Materials Project (MEMP).<sup>6</sup> MELA members meet once a year, and communicate throughout the year by means of a listserv with approximately 546 subscribers.<sup>7</sup> The listserv is not restricted to MELA members only, but is open to anyone who is simply interested in ME collections. It is open to any professional reference questions, announcements, and book-related news.

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<sup>5</sup> Middle East Librarians Association, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.mela.us/>

<sup>6</sup> *The Middle East Materials Project (MEMP), Center for Research Libraries, Global Resources Network*, accessed February 17, 2018, <https://www.crl.edu/area-studies/memp/membership-information/executive-committee>

MEMP was established in 1987 under the name of Middle East Microform Project, changing to the current name in 2013. It is under the umbrella of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), and has a membership that requires its members' institutions to pay a fee. MEMP members agreed to focus their efforts on collecting newspapers from the Middle East. They also collect and preserve historical manuscripts, government documents, and ephemeral collections. The original focus was to microfilm the shared and purchased materials; MEMP today is moving slowly to more digitization as a way of preservation and access. See Judith Alspach, "A Collection- Level Analysis of the Middle East Materials Project," *MELA Notes* 88 (2015): 7–23.

<sup>7</sup> I want to thank Evyn Kropf, MELA-net list manager and the Middle East Studies librarian at the University of Michigan, who helped me and provided me with the number of subscribers.

### **Collections in the U.S. and Canada**

By the end of the nineteenth century, many educational institutions showed a great demand for collecting manuscripts in Arabic and other Middle Eastern languages, such as Egyptian hieroglyphic papyri, Coptic and Syriac manuscripts, and Arabic, Ottoman, and Persian manuscripts. Today more than 40 university libraries in North America collect materials from and about the ME in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish.<sup>8</sup> Some of these materials are open access, available online for free. Others are kept in the library's rare books collections or in the archives, open for researchers to use; perhaps one day they may be digitized. In this section, I will give examples of some of the collections in universities in the U.S. and Canada.

**Library of Congress:** The African and Middle Eastern Division of the Library of Congress (LC) was established in 1978. It covers 77 countries in three sections: Africa, Hebraic, and Near East. The Near East section itself was created in 1945, and covers 40 languages and all formats of print materials, manuscripts, and microfilm. The Manuscripts Division holds important materials such as 1,300 manuscripts and 3,700 books collected by Shaykh Mahmud al-Imam al-Mansuri, a faculty member of al-Azhar University in Cairo; including a copy of the Quran written in Kufic script from the eleventh century. Other notable holdings include 75,000 photographs of the Arab world from the nineteenth century, and 1,819 photographs of the Ottoman Empire during the time of Sultan Abdul-Hamid II.<sup>9</sup>

**Princeton University:** This collection of ME manuscripts is considered the largest and oldest collection in the U.S. The ME library has almost 10,000 volumes of Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and other manuscripts written in Arabic script. In 1942,

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<sup>8</sup> "MELA: Cooperation Among Middle East Libraries of North America: A Workshop held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, May 26–31, 1975," 191. <https://www.mela.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Cooperation-among-middle-east-libraries-of-north-america.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> "[The Arab World] Near East Collections: An Illustrated Guide (Library of Congress–African & Middle Eastern Division)," <https://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/guide/nes-arabworld.html>



Robert Garrett donated his collection of many of the manuscripts that now form the ME collection. Other manuscripts were received as gifts or were purchased. The manuscripts cover topics related to Islamic learning, including religious and secular topics. Most of the manuscripts are accessible through the Princeton Digital Library of Islamic Manuscripts. The library also has 1,474 Arabic movies, and 150 posters from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt.<sup>10</sup>

**University of Oregon's Yemeni Zaydi Manuscripts:** This collection is an example of how ME collections can preserve historical materials that are at risk of being lost, in this case because of the current war in Yemen. The Yemeni manuscript collection was copied and digitized after David Hollenberg made great efforts to find donors to help him train Yemeni citizens to scan and digitize their manuscripts and make them available online for free. The project was the result of a collaboration among the University of Oregon, Princeton University, Freie University in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, and Centre Français d'Archéologie et de Sciences Sociales de Sanaa (CEFAS).<sup>11</sup>

**University of California, Los Angeles:** The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), has the second largest collection of ME manuscripts in the United States. UCLA has around 7,000 manuscripts written in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Armenian. The collection covers topics including medicine, literature, theology, law, and other topics. Some of the manuscripts date back to the eleventh century.

**Yale University:** Yale University has 4000 manuscripts in Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, and Persian. Some of the manuscripts date back to the seventh century. The library also has the Ghassem Ghani collection of personal papers dealing with diplomacy in the nineteenth century, and materials covering twentieth-century political and diplomatic history. There is also a cinema and

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<sup>10</sup> "Garrett Collection of Arabic Manuscripts | Rare Books and Special Collections," <https://rbsc.princeton.edu/collections/garrett-collection-arabic-manuscripts>

<sup>11</sup> "YMDI | The Yemeni Manuscript Digitization Initiative," <https://ymdi.uoregon.edu/>

performing arts collection, which includes the collection of Ali al-Kassar and an Arab film poster collection.

**McGill University:** McGill University has almost 380 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Many of the manuscripts are Qurans, as well as tracts on Sufism and Shi'ite sects, Turkish manuscripts, and two Malay manuscripts. They also have some manuscripts of Persian poetry, painting leaves dating back to the thirteenth century, leaves from the Demotte as well as other *Shahnamehs*, and other unique items.<sup>12</sup>

**University of Chicago:** The ME collection includes Arabic manuscripts; an online bibliography of Mamluk Studies; nineteenth-century maps of the Middle East, North Africa, and the ancient Near East; and a Classics Collection from 1850.

**Harvard University:** Harvard University shares great numbers of digital collection of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts. Harvard has between 270 and 280 digitized manuscripts, more than 58 maps, and the personal correspondence of a Young Turk from 1900.

**Other collections:** Other ME collections are housed in Cornell University, Northwestern University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Michigan, Indiana University, Columbia University, New York University, and University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, along with other universities in the U.S. and Canada. In fact, there are more collections than one can mention in a short essay.

Middle East Studies librarians have played a historical role in collecting, cataloging, preserving, and digitizing Middle Eastern materials. Their collaboration with researchers from their own and other fields made many of the collection possible, giving access not only to researchers in the U.S. and Canada but to scholars throughout

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<sup>12</sup> "Islamic Manuscripts: McGill"

<http://libraryguides.mcgill.ca/Islamicmanuscripts>

See also "McGill Library/Bibliothèque, Shahnameh by Ferdosi," <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/shahnameh/about.html>

the world though online access or interlibrary loan. Middle East Studies librarians have helped to preserve the most venerable cultural heritage materials in the ME. One hopes to see more collaborative projects to digitize books, journals, and other heritage materials.

## **The Knowledge Quarter: The British Library's New Initiative of Partnership**

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### **Introduction**

This paper was presented at the Middle East Librarians Association Annual Conference (November 2016 in Boston). The main theme of the conference was collaboration and partnership between libraries and information institutions. The paper therefore aims to shed light on Knowledge Quarter (KQ), the newly developed initiative by the British Library.

With the increasing demands on academic libraries to support research and teaching activities in their respective institutions, it is rarely possible for these libraries to have enough resources to fulfil the needs of their patrons, especially since there is a parallel increasing demand on diminishing library finances. In order for these libraries to deliver what their clients actually need, a need arose for building collaborative relationships with other libraries, and hence the idea of library consortia.

Collaboration is widely recognized as the best way for libraries to cope with ever-increasing challenges such as the volume of information resources, the nature and quality of information, user needs and expectations, information and communication technology competencies and infrastructure, inflated cost of information resources, and staffing needs. However, although these challenges have continued to prevail, libraries working under collaborative initiatives such as the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) have registered tremendous success.

For instance, most of the success stories reported by African university librarians revolve around collaboration and networking within institutions to lobby policy makers, and within the country to form consortia and share the subscription of e-resources, build capacity, and get professional support. The potential and actual result of networking, cooperation, and digitization is to modify the

functions of acquiring, storing, and disseminating information and knowledge, and hence the need to be supported.<sup>1</sup> Because of limited resources there is, therefore, a need to build on achievements and share experiences and best practices through collaboration and networks.

### **Resource Sharing in Libraries**

The benefits of collaboration, consortia, networks, and peer support have been emphasized in information science literature for a long time. To start with, the American Library Association (ALA) Seminar on Network and Multi-Type Library Co-operation defines the term resource sharing as “The co-operative structures, which cross jurisdictional, institutional, and often political boundaries to join in a common enterprise, several types of libraries—academic, special, and public.”<sup>2</sup>

The term “resource” applies to any thing, person, or action to which one turns for aid in time of need. The word “sharing” denotes apportioning, allotting, or contributing something that is owned to benefit others. “Resource sharing” in its most positive aspects entails reciprocity, implying a partnership in which each member has something useful to contribute to others and is willing and able to make available when needed. “Library Resources,” however, have been defined in several ways. According to John Fetterman, they are “... any and all of the materials, functions, and services which constitute a modern library system... It is ... amalgamation of people (manpower), processes, ideas, materials, and money which form the substance of a library and can be described as its resources.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. G. N. Musoke, “Strategies for addressing the university library users’ changing needs and practices in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 34, no. 6 (Nov. 2008): 532–538.

<sup>2</sup> The American Library Association, “Guidelines for Resource-Sharing Response to Disaster Preparation and Response” (2009).

<sup>3</sup> John Fetterman, “Resource Sharing in Libraries—Why?” in *Resource Sharing in Libraries, Why, How, When? Next Action Steps*, ed. Allen Kent (Dekker, NY, 1974), 3.

So, resource sharing is a partnership in which each member contributes. The principle of resource sharing is to provide maximum service at a minimum cost.<sup>4</sup>

The main objective of resource sharing is to increase the availability and accessibility of resources among the participating libraries and to avoid duplication in acquisitions and activities, which will help to reduce costs and raise library profiles by increasing exposure of the libraries' resources and services.

### **Partnership Initiatives in London**

Looking at the various collaboration and partnership initiatives amongst libraries and academic institutions in London, one could divide these initiatives into two main categories. The first category is initiatives that aim to advocate and provide community support. The second category emphasizes user experience and technical support. A prime example of the latter category is FIHRIST, the union catalogue of Islamic manuscript collections in London. It was first developed by the Oxford & Cambridge Islamic Manuscripts Catalogue Online Project (OCIMCO), with the aim of improving access to the valuable Islamic texts held in the Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, and Cambridge University Library. This catalogue was created with a grant from the Digital Resources for Islamic Studies program of JISC (formerly the Joint Information Systems Committee).<sup>5</sup>

The second example of London consortia belongs to the first category, "advocacy and community support," and is widely known as the M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries.<sup>6</sup> As the name suggests, the consortium provides a collaborative venue for the academic libraries within the M25 region<sup>7</sup> and more widely across the east and southeast of London. Its aim is to provide services and resources for the benefit of learners and researchers in these universities. It includes 57 member institutions representing a total of

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<sup>4</sup> A. M. Venkatachalam, "Resource sharing among management institute libraries in Tami Nadu: a study" (Ph.D. diss., Alagappa University [India], Department of Library and Information Science, 2011), 5.

<sup>5</sup> FIHRIST: <http://www.fihrist.org.uk/about>

<sup>6</sup> M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries: <http://www.m25lib.ac.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> The M25 or London Orbital Motorway is a 117-mile (188 km) motorway that encircles almost all of greater London.

over 160 libraries—ranging from large institutions of higher education, such as the University of London Colleges and London Metropolitan University, to smaller establishments such as the Wiener Library, and including specialized collections such as the Victoria & Albert.<sup>8</sup>

The mission of the M25, as stated on their website, is to develop and improve access to library and information services across the region in support of learning and research, by facilitating co-operation amongst consortium members and by collaborating with relevant regional and national organizations. This mission is supported by three goals: (a) to facilitate access to London's diverse and complex range of library resources for learners and researchers, through the development and delivery of collaborative services; (b) to encourage and enable mutual support of member libraries in improving services to their users; and (c) to represent the consortium's best interests and to influence policy-making through collaboration with appropriate regional and national organizations; this includes taking the lead on relevant strategic issues.

One of the consortium's services is to provide a forum for innovation and mutual support through their training courses and their annual conference. The last annual conference took place 3 May 2017 with a theme titled "Inspiring Staff," and attracted 111 delegates, speakers, and sponsors. They also run a number of professional development courses and academic activities to support librarians and information officers within the group, as well as members of the public. In 2016, more than 624 delegates attended career development training and other events.<sup>9</sup>

London Universities Purchasing Consortium is a different model of partnership and collaboration. Established in 1968, LUPC is a not-for-profit professional buying organization aiming to generate savings and value through collaborative procurement of goods and services. As a result, the consortium members achieved savings of £33m through collaborative deals for commonly-bought services.

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<sup>8</sup> List of academic libraries participating in Access25: <http://www.m25lib.ac.uk/m25-resources-and-activities/access25/list-participating-libraries/>

<sup>9</sup> M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries annual report 2015–2016: [http://www.m25lib.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/annualreports/16\\_0697-m25-annual-report-high-res.pdf](http://www.m25lib.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/annualreports/16_0697-m25-annual-report-high-res.pdf)

The consortium offers various services to the subscribing libraries, such as book purchases, standing orders, e-books and related material, supplying periodicals, and other services, such as furniture and library technologies.

### **The Knowledge Quarter**

The Knowledge Quarter was established in 2014 to encourage openness, innovation, networking, and opportunity by making the facilities, collections, and expertise of our members understood, available, and used as widely as possible for the benefit of researchers, creative people, students, and the whole community.

The Knowledge Quarter currently comprises one of the largest concentration of students in London and the largest number of higher education institutions. Not only is the number of institutions a significant aspect, but also the services that the institutions are willing to offer to other members. For instance, the Wellcome Trust is the United Kingdom's largest provider of non-governmental funding for scientific research; the Charles Dickens Museum holds the world's most important collection of paintings, rare editions, manuscripts, original furniture, and other items relating to the life and work of Dickens; and the London Metropolitan Archive's extensive holdings amount to over 72 miles of records of local, regional, and national importance.

At the inauguration of the initiative, MP George Osborn said:

*Just as the great Victorian railway engineers built a transport hub for people and goods in this part of London, and South Kensington was the knowledge hub of the 19th century, the Knowledge Quarter has become established as an interchange for creative ideas, research and innovation: a centre for the knowledge economy in the 21st century.*

The above vision is exemplified in four key strategic objectives or priorities. The first priority is to facilitate knowledge exchange and identify opportunities for openness, collaboration, networking, and efficiencies. The second is to increase access to resources and collections and create opportunities for local community engagement. The third priority is to identify and support work that improves the local sustainable environment. Finally, it is a priority to



increase the area's profile through advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

In terms of resource sharing, the Knowledge Quarter supports the local community by increasing access to the joint resources and collections of its partners. A comprehensive program of community engagement events, activities, and projects are being developed and delivered that aims to foster relationships between the Knowledge Quarter, young people, schools, charities, and the local residential community.

### **Conclusion**

Partnership is the magic keyword in today's libraries. Although the concept is not a new one, there is an increasing demand to develop partnership strategies because of the significant cuts in libraries' budgets. Moreover, partnership is instrumental in raising the profile of any library within a consortium by engaging with the wider communities. An initiative such as Knowledge Quarter is a clear example of the importance of partnership in academic libraries and institutions. This is exemplified in the increasing number of joint services and events that have been completed in the very short life of the initiative.

## REVIEWS

*Iqbal*. By Mustansir Mir. Makers of Islamic Civilization. London, New York, and New Delhi: I. B. Tauris and Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xii, 157, with index. \$16.95 (paperback). ISBN: 1845110943.

Featured in a series titled Makers of Islamic Civilization, *Iqbal* is an engaging bio-bibliographical study written by Professor Mustansir Mir of Youngstown State University in Ohio on the life and works of a prominent late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writer, intellectual, and politician hailing from South Asia. Consisting of six main chapters, which range in focus from the life of Iqbal itself to concise summaries of the numerous writings that he penned, this work provides a highly useful introduction to the life and intellectual output (with a noticeable emphasis on the latter) of a key figure. Until the publication of this work, much of the scholarship on Iqbal in English consisted of translations of his work, including speeches, letters, and other writings, but they were often not situated biographically. This accessible book is a must-read for those who are seeking to begin their journey into the world of scholarship on Iqbal and his times.

The book consists of six main chapters, with three short sections preceding these chapters and two following them. "Acknowledgements," "Iqbal's Texts Cited," and "Preface" precede the six chapters. In one of these sections, "Iqbal's Texts Cited," Mir notes that this work features his own translations of Iqbal's work from Persian and Urdu into English. Readers should also attend to this section because it gives insight into the method that the author has used in citing Iqbal's writings throughout the work. Another stylistic point to note is that, likely for the sake of ease of reading by broad audiences, non-English words have not been fully romanized. The only exceptions to this are markings to showcase the letters 'ayn and hamza.

The first chapter, "Life, Personality, and Works," provides an overview of these three components. Specifically, the chapter begins with Iqbal's birth and early years in Sialkot and leads the reader

through various cities that he called home throughout the course of his life, including Lahore, London, and Munich. This chapter also provides a detailed overview of Iqbal's writings, both poetry and prose. The second and third chapters ("Major Themes of Poetry" and "Poetic Art") focus on Iqbal's poetic production. The author considers a range of themes that emerge in Iqbal's poetry, including "Nature," "The Human Situation," "*Khudi*" (selfhood), "Life as Quest," "Intellect and Love," "Islam as a Living Faith," "The Prophet and the Qur'an," and "East and West." This emphasis on Iqbal's poetic production is perhaps fitting, given an earlier publication by the same author titled *Tulip in the Desert: A Selection of the Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal*. The fourth and fifth chapters ("Philosophical Thought" and "Social and Political Thought") discuss Iqbal's views as presented in some of his prose works. The final main chapter provides insights into "Iqbal's Legacy," while the two sections following the final chapter offer bibliographic information in narrative style for further reading, along with an index.

"Further Reading," one of the two sections following "Iqbal's Legacy," is much more than simply a list of sources. For one, Mir rewards the ardent reader with a narrativization of materials worth considering for further study of the topic. Furthermore, he articulates various projects that would be ideal for interested scholars to carry out, particularly in terms of the gaps in the preexisting scholarship on Iqbal and his work. On another note, this section mainly features works written in English as sources for further reading. Given that scholars with other linguistic capabilities may consult this work, it could have been useful to include, within this section or even a separate section, key primary and secondary sources in other languages. While a few such works are cited, the majority is not included. It is also unclear which sources the author has used in writing this work, given limited citations. This may have been due to the scope and nature of an introductory text.

The final section of the work is devoted to a useful index. When a word is indexed that may be unfamiliar to non-specialist readers, a definition is provided in an adjacent position. Examples include "*bikhudi* (selflessness)" and "*ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning)." Another strong point about the index is that, in relation to a given term that a reader may look up, related terms are provided where relevant. For example, when one looks up "finality of prophethood"

in the index, relevant page numbers are given (45, 90, 93, 109), along with the following note: “*see also* Muhammad.”

More broadly, Iqbal belongs to a series titled *Makers of Islamic Civilization*, which has been developed under the auspices of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and, according to a brief description preceding the work, “provides an introduction to outstanding figures in the history of Islamic civilization.” Other individuals covered in this series, as seen through the titles, include Ibn Battuta, Rumi, Said Nursi, Sibawayhi, Sinan, Tabari, and Umar. In reading this work, in relation to the series to which it belongs and the aforementioned series description, several questions emerge: How were such outstanding figures chosen for inclusion in this series? What are their (shared) characteristics? What does it mean to be a maker of Islamic civilization? What does Islamic civilization mean in this context? While approaching the text through these questions may not appeal to all readers seeking to gain an introduction into Iqbal’s life, works, and times, addressing them more explicitly would have provided the opportunity for interested readers to understand details in relation to broader scholarly concerns, thus widening the appeal of the work.

In sum, *Iqbal* successfully introduces his life, work, and thought to all audiences. It deftly condenses Iqbal’s extensive corpus and ideas into a work consisting of less than 200 pages, making it a highly accessible and valuable work for readers at various levels. Academic libraries with collections in religion, philosophy, and related fields will find it—and perhaps the series to which the book belongs more broadly—to be an extremely worthy addition.

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*All Faces but Mine: The Poetry of Samih Al-Qasim*. Translated from the Arabic by Abdulwahid Lu’lu’a. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2015. Pp. xiv, 261. ISBN: 9780815610526.

Abdulwahid Lu’lu’a, the translator of this work, is a retired Iraqi professor of English literature. He taught at many Arab universities, published books in Arabic, and translated books into English and Arabic, winning a range of literary prizes.

Samih Al-Qasim, the poet of this collection, was born in 1939 in the city of Zarqa. Following the onset of the Second World War, Al-Qasim moved with his family to Rama in Galilee, Israel, where he lived until his death in 2014.

Al-Qasim took an interest in poetry from an early age and by the age of 18 his first collection of poems, *Mawakib al-Shams* (The Sun Processions) was published. He became heavily involved in political activism and was known as one of the “resistance poets,” a group of Palestinian poets including Mahmoud Darwish and Tawfiq Zayyad whose poetry was widely celebrated as part of the Palestinian national movement.

Al-Qasim’s works include poems, plays, novels, and political essays on various topics. He also edited works in journals such as *al-Ittihad* and *al-Jadid*.

*All Faces but Mine* is a selection of poetry from throughout Al-Qasim’s life, translated into English by Lu’lu’a’s delicate art that keeps the meaning and the beauty of the original poem intact. He arranged this translation in 12 chapters with a selection of the poet’s works arranged chronologically from 1991 to 2014.

Al-Qasim’s poems, like much other Arabic poetry of Palestine, are famous for celebrating the revolution and resistance to the Israeli occupation of historic Palestine. Despite Al-Qasim’s imprisonments and house arrests, he never stopped writing in the same revolutionary style. Among his works, he has a genre called *sarbiyya*, “flock poems.” In a flock of birds flying together, sometimes there are one or two birds which are flying sideways and each time they will be feeding new ideas or images back to the flock. These birds metaphorically represent activists. The poet has twelve of such “flock poems” among his fifty-six collections. A few examples in this book are as follows:

“The funeral oration by the deceased at his memorial celebration,” in which the dead-alive is a Palestinian hero. The poem focuses on the Arab nations who are holding memorial days only for dead people, showing their concern, bringing flowers, and sending condolences. The dead-alive hero here is imitating the tragedy of Hamlet whose uncle, an invader, married Hamlet’s mother. In this case, Palestine is the motherland of the poet and the Palestinian is bewildered between the illusion and the image of Arab nations gathered only to commemorate the “dead,” and the reality of the supposed existence of Arab nations, with their invader marrying their homeland.

I, the Arab Hamlet, witness me:  
 Training my mind in the madness puzzles.  
 My father is dead, who does not die,  
 My mother is my mother.  
 My kingdom is booty for my uncle. (p. 129)

The birds shoot out of the flock back and forth with an image of “war that looked like a war” but not a real one, and “peace that looked like a peace” but not a real one.

“Atlantis King” is another “flock poem” in which is a symbolic representation of the life and death of Yasir Arafat and his style of management of Palestine. The story starts from its ending and the birds which are flying off from the flock in this poem are the images of King Yasir of Atlantis-Palestine. The poet tells the king bluntly how he had miscalculated the situation and now has to pay the price. The King tells the reader at the very beginning that he has prepared himself for this ending:

My throne is on water. My kingdom is on water...  
 And of water are my scepter subjects.  
 Risking my innocence... I prepared the fire baptism  
 And passed through hell towards the torment... (p. 135)

“I regret” is another “flock poem,” published in 2009 as a reaction to the 2008 Israeli bombardment in Gaza. The present-day Israelis’ manner is the same as the ancient Israelites under the leadership of Joshua, where both thought that God was fighting Palestinians for them when they defeated the five Palestinian kings, locked them in a cave blocked with a big rock, and let them die without being noticed. The poet, in a similar way as in Hamlet, is holding a mirror so the Israeli can see in himself his real human nature, which is not different from the basic nature of the Palestinians. This poem is a conversation between Israeli and Palestinian. The Palestinian addresses the Israeli as “my friend and rich-poor enemy”:

My hard life is costly,  
 Oh, my brother, and rich-poor enemy.  
 My quick, sudden death is costly.  
 I regret,  
 Because I was born outside the system... (p. 184)

... You tell us that God has chosen you.  
 A guidance for humans,  
 ...But you lie one day,  
 You steal one day,  
 You kill one day,  
 ...So can you sympathize, and will you sympathize,  
 When, my brother, and pious enemy,  
 Will you regret? (p. 187)

Each time a bird shoots sideways, it makes the reader wonder with what message it would fly back to its flock.

Through his poems, Al-Qasim delivered an understanding of what Palestinians have endured during all these years of conflict with Israelis, the revolution, and the resistance to occupation. The poet advocated by his words for Palestinians' rights. His defense was sharp while his poems were tender. His life as an activist and his poems, full of melancholy, are the highlights which invite the reader to keep reading his poems.

In general, this book is a very well-rounded translation which is easy to follow. It is a good source for any literary collection, especially any academic library that supports Arabic Studies.

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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*Institutional Reform & Economic Development in Egypt*. Edited by Noha El-Mikawy and Heba Handoussa. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002. Pp. 211, with references. \$27.50 (paperback). ISBN: 9774247027.

*Institutional Reform & Economic Development in Egypt* examines the Egyptian state's evolving role in the legal and administrative sectors as it affects the Egyptian economy. This study is approached through an interdisciplinary lens, with economists and political scientists analyzing the economic and political institutions in relation to legislation, administrative procedures, and the behavior of key agents, such as employers, employees, and officials. Interviews, opinion surveys, context analysis, and analysis of the evolution of legislation as it relates to investment, trade, and

employment were evaluated by the analysts. The argument by the contributors is that the success of the economy in Egypt is influenced by the evolving political infrastructure, which also includes institutions and organizations that contribute to policymaking and that administer policies.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One is Institutional Reform of the Process of Legislation, and Part Two is Institutional Reform of Export and Investment. The book contains graphs, tables, and an appendix section. The contributors are renowned scholars in the field of economics and political science. Their names include the editors, Noha El-Mikawy and Heba Handoussa; Ahmed Ghoneim, Heba Abou Shnief, Amr Hashem, Maye Kassem, Abdel Hafez El-Sawi, Ali El-Sawi; and finally Mohamed Shuman.

The political and economic trends of the 1980s and 1990s are traced with the finding that although there were some important changes toward economic liberalization in the Egyptian private sector, indeed there remained weaknesses in the areas of legislation for economic reform, poor promotion in the areas of investment and exports, and a need for access to up-to-date information, better training, and more advanced technological applications. In addition, recommendations are given by the editor Heba Handoussa in the areas of legislation, investment, the employment sector, promotion agencies, the national bureaucratic policy, and the information and technological policy.

There are references at the end of each chapter, which any researcher can find useful for further reading on the State of Egypt, including names of interviewees. I recommend this thoroughly researched book on Egypt's economic and political sector during the late twentieth to the early twenty-first centuries to academic libraries.

NANCY BEYGHJANIAN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

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*Dispatches from Pakistan*. Edited by Madiha R. Tahir, Qalandar Bux Memon, and Vijay Prashad. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. Pp. 288, with index. \$69.00 (hardback); \$22.95 (paperback). ISBN: 9780816692231; 9780816692248.

Description: Journalists, poets, and academics from Pakistan and its diasporas describe Pakistan through the lives of its labor leaders, farmers, women, and artists. Their goal, which they achieve, is to move the discourse beyond the usual depictions of violence and religion towards a deeper understanding of Pakistan. In the essays violence and religion are examined through alternative perspectives designed to guide a global audience towards a more nuanced understanding of Pakistan. The beginning dispatch, Habib Jalib's poem "What does Pakistan mean?" asks the question these essays explore. The use of poetry as the first and last dispatch and in the essays guides the reader towards understanding the breadth and depth of Pakistan's culture.

Several authors explore the effects of the actions of the government and military on the civilian population. In "New Wine in Old Bottles," Aasim Sajjad Akhtar describes the impact of the underground economy, cash flow, and neoliberalism on a changing society. Saadia Toor analyzes the military's control of the country and economy, its conflict with Okara farmers and organized labor groups, and support for Musharraf's governance and policies by liberal progressives and NGO's in "The Neoliberal Security State." Ayessha Siddiqi focuses on the military's impact on politics and its economy in "The General's Labyrinth: Pakistan and Its Military." The U.S.-Pakistan quid-pro-quo relationship of Pakistan's support of the U.S.'s War on Terror in return for U.S. economic aid is described in Junaid Rana's "The Desperate U.S.-Pakistan Alliance," which includes a chronicle description of the alliance. Readers unfamiliar with the history of U.S. involvement in Pakistan may be surprised by its negative description in these essays.

Topics not covered in Western media's coverage include essays on populist leaders, women, economics, and labor leaders. Madiha R. Tahir traces Imran Khan's career as a politician, party leader of the Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf (PTI), and hero in "I'll be your Mirror: The Politics of Pakistan's Populism." The growing role of women in civic positions is the focus of Amina Jamal's "Feminism and 'Fundamentalism' in Pakistan," which includes the history of the Family Muslim Laws and the Hudood Ordinances, the growth of

Jamaat-e-Islami and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal groups, and the tension between upper-class feminists with women in Jamaat-e-Islami. Two essays examine different aspects of labor: Maliha Safri's "The Modern Mixed Political Economy of Pakistan" reviews the economic impact of feudal and capitalistic practices of bonded labor (peshgi) and sharecropping; Qalandar Bux Memon describes the experiences of four labor leaders in "Blood on the Path of Love: Faisalabad, Pakistan." These essays provide the reader a deeper understanding of Pakistani society.

Readers gain a better understanding of Pakistan's diverse regions and ethnic and political groups in the following essays. Humeira Iqtidar's "Punjab in Play" answers a frequently-asked question about the prominence of the Punjab in Pakistan which includes its history, comparison of its urban and rural communities, and recognition of its diversity. Mahvish Ahmad recounts the four betrayals of the Balochistan community by the government in "Balochistan Betrayal," including the community's hope for independence, the promise of self-organization, out-sourcing its resources to international companies, and governance and policing by outsiders. Sultani-I-Rome's "Swat in Transition" relates the region's history and governance, the judicial system, the enforcement of Islamic law by the Tahrik Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), and the creation and role of the Taliban in SWAT. "A Tempest in my Harbor: Gwaden, Balochistan" by Hafeez Jamali describes the takeover of Gwadar, Balochistan, by the Pakistani government to "modernize" the region as a deep water port, and the loss of land, homes, fishing rights, and freedom that occurred, resulting in the Fisherfolk's Movement. Iqbal Khattak's "Inside Militancy in Waziristan" reviews various tribal leaders and Taliban factions in Waziristan whose inter-group alliances and competing goals illustrate this region's complexity. "The Nature of Conservation: Conflict and Articulation in Northern Pakistan" by Shafqat Hussain outlines the conflict around the Khunjerab National Park, sited on the traditional hunting and grazing lands of the Shimshal. At issue are opposing views on who owns the land—the Shimshal community or nature and its creatures—as advocated by George Schaller, an American naturalist who worked to protect its wildlife.

Poetry and art, important aspects of Pakistani culture, are explored in several essays for internal and external meaning. "Poetic Reflection & Activism in Gilgit-Baltistan" describes poetry by local activist poets on the government's intervention in their lives.

Nosheen Ali shares a goal to bring Shiite and Sunni clerics together at a Mushaira gathering to share poetry and to create peace between them. Zahra Malkani's "Several Dawns over the Indus: Three Maps" includes hand-drawn maps and poetry that illustrate different perspectives on Pakistan's political and geographic boundaries. Hammad Nasar's "The Art of Extremes" provides an overview of contemporary art (1950s–) by Pakistani artists abroad and at home, the development of its art schools and teachers, the miniature art focus, and its extension by these artists. *Dispatches from Pakistan* ends with Fehmida Riyaz's poem "Will You Not See the Full Moon = Kya Tum Poora Chand Na Dekhoge," a parallel to the beginning poetry by Habib Jalib and Ahmad Faraz. Readers interested in learning about Pakistan's art and literary cultures will enjoy these essays.

Evaluation: A good introduction to Pakistan's history, people, and geography. Some essays contain notes and works cited.

Library specific: Public libraries, academic libraries with South Asian collections.

Final judgement of the work: *Dispatches from Pakistan* is an excellent compilation of poetry, art, and essays by Pakistani journalists, writers, and academicians to guide readers to a deeper understanding of Pakistan. The use of poetry and art in *Dispatches* reveals Pakistan's deep artistic heritage for the reader. Often critical of Western influence and Pakistan's military and government, *Dispatches from Pakistan* conveys the hope for a more global understanding of Pakistan.

PEGGY CABRERA

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

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*Talking Through the Door: An Anthology of Contemporary Middle Eastern American Writing.* By Susan A. Peckham and Lisa S. Majaj. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014. Pp. 244. \$34.95 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780815633471.

*Talking Through the Door* is a timely contribution to the literature of contemporary Middle Eastern American writers and, indeed, to American literature as a whole. The work is a posthumous publication by the late editor Susan Atefat-Peckham, who tragically

lost her life in a car accident more than ten years ago. It clearly places itself within the genre of Middle Eastern or Arab American writing, specifically complementing previous volumes such as *Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab American Poetry* (1988), *Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab American and Arab Canadian Feminists* (1994), and *Post Gibran: Anthology of Arab American Writing* (1998). What sets this volume apart is that, while previous works focused on Arab Americans, this collection features a wider geographic cross-section of selected authors with ethnic connections to the Middle East and North Africa, such as Egypt, Libya, and Iran, as well as a diverse representation of religious and philosophical orientations including Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and non-religious perspectives. Hence, the title is “Middle Eastern American” to convey this broader range of writing.

Lisa Suhair Majaj, who helped publish the work, has written a succinct and informative foreword that places the current work in the context of previous literature and touches upon its themes of identity, diaspora, and cultural understanding, among others, setting us up for Peckham’s informative introduction. Peckham begins with a personal reflection, as an Iranian American, on her experience as an ethnic minority and the trouble she had fitting into the neatly delineated categories on so many college applications. Classification and terminology to describe large groups of people is always flawed and problematic, she rightly points out, and, while hesitant, she settles on the term “Middle Eastern American.” While the writers hail from various backgrounds, she hopes to emphasize the American part of their identities and their contribution to American literature, while warning that the creation of “special units” in academia has marginalized such voices, a phenomena she wishes to avoid here.

Peckham’s main purpose is to promote “mutual understanding” between cultures, which was highly relevant in the period during which she worked shortly after the 9/11 attacks and perhaps more so today as prejudice, suspicion, and misunderstanding swirls through contemporary debates about terrorism and immigration. The title’s catch-phrase, *Talking Through the Door*, comes from a line of Rumi’s love poems and is her allusion to the process of intercultural communication through art by cutting across entrenched cultural and linguistic barriers. Peckham then provides us with a survey, largely based upon Marwan Obiedat’s *American Literature and Orientalism*, of classic medieval Western caricatures of Islam, which she correctly

argues also colored Western monolithic perceptions of the region and its inhabitants as a whole while continuing to the present day with stereotypes found in Hollywood's scary cookie-cutter Arab terrorist. The goal of art is empathy, she writes, intending for this anthology to build bridges across cultures, form new understandings of the complexity of the region and its peoples, as well as acknowledge the literary merit of its authors in their own right.

Authors' works include an even mix of prose and poetry, fiction and non-fiction, men and women's voices. Brief author biographies are in the end-section, which includes their major works. Sources of the featured writings are mentioned in the acknowledgements. There is no glossary or other references.

Overall, the book serves its purposes well and will appeal to a wide audience, undergraduate and graduate students, scholars, and the general public. Readers will find in the introduction important references to seminal works and writers in the genre, and further writings in the biographies, making this a great point of departure for students approaching the topic for the first time. Key themes and areas of interest are the Middle East, American literature, identity and its politics, feminism, diaspora, family, belonging, diversity, prejudice, discrimination, and culture. It is recommended for academic libraries interested in these topics as well as for public libraries and general readership.

JUSTIN PARROTT

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY IN ABU DHABI

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*The Arab Revolts: Dispatches on Militant Democracy in the Middle East.* Edited by David McMurray and Amanda Ufheil-Somers. Public Cultures of the Middle East and North Africa. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. Pp. ix, 260, with notes, index. ISBN: 9780253009685 (cloth); 9780253009753 (paperback); 9780253009784 (e-book).

*The Arab Revolts* consists of a collection of articles on the 2011 uprisings sparked by the Tunisian protests in December 2010. All articles were originally published in the *Middle East Report* and contain an analysis of the causes and consequences of these events that is neither too broad nor too detailed. The book is arranged into

five sections covering the following countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. Each section begins with current events in the country of interest, shifts to historical analysis, then returns to current conditions. Libya is not covered due to the fact that it was nearly impossible to conduct research there before the fall of Qaddafi.

This collection helps fill in the gaps left by Western media's emphasis on the Arab Spring uprisings as spontaneous youthful protests by providing a more nuanced analysis that situates them within both the local social, political, and economic history of individual countries, as well as broader trends touching upon the Middle East in general. Several common themes recur in the historical analyses of these five countries as factors leading up to the 2011 uprisings: increased poverty, frequently due to neo-liberal reforms that led to the concentration of wealth in a small segment of the population; repressive, authoritarian regimes that interfere with daily living; and increased religiosity. Emphasis is also placed on the history of collective action in each of these countries that has largely gone unnoticed by Western media. Country-specific issues include the breakdown of civil society under the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, the growth of the "deep state" in Egypt, the North-South and Sunni-Zaydi dichotomies in Yemen, the repression of secular opposition in Syria, and the institutional discrimination against the majority Shi'i population in Bahrain.

The writing is both insightful and accessible, making this work suitable for a broad audience, including college students, policy makers and general readers. Accessibility to non-Arabic speakers is enhanced by the lack of diacritics as well as the use of typical English spelling for names where feasible. Each article is followed by a list of references that typically provide more detailed and/or background information. The index mainly covers personal names, corporate bodies, and places, and a section of short biographies of the contributors is included. This book is an excellent addition to any library or institution that would like to provide access to a solid collection of analyses on the history and causes of the Arab Spring.

DENISE SOUFI

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

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*Story of Joseph: A Fourteenth-Century Turkish Morality Play.* By Sheyyad Hamza; translated by Bill Hickman. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014. Pp. 148, with bibliography and index. \$24.95. ISBN: 9780815633570.

Bill Hickman's translation of this poem for the Syracuse University Press' Middle East Literature in Translation series into a dramatic work marks a meaningful and creative effort. Hickman, now retired, but formerly a professor of Turkish language and literature at the University of California, Berkeley, has accomplished much more than simply offering a translation of this fourteenth-century Turkish religiously-inspired poem. He has rethought it as a form and created a book with many more facets—specifically, the translation is couched in its journey into publication and the poem's context in literature.

For one thing, Hickman details his original plans to publish a more fully annotated scholarly bilingual edition with the poem. While this was rejected as risky because of the niche nature of the work and the costs associated, Hickman chose to publish the English only with a decent amount of background—even to the point of adding line counts so a dedicated reader could go back into the fourteenth-century Turkish text and do his or her own language and poetic studies side-by-side. He hopes this work will inspire people to continue to pursue Turkish language and literary studies.

But the notion of “inspiration to study” by the poem is not the only scholarly value of this compact text and translation. Hickman also sets aside short sections of the book detailing the historic values of the work. For instance, Hickman contextualizes the poem's relationship to Islamic traditions generally, fourteenth-century Turkism and Islamic culture specifically, and the Judeo-Christian tradition to argue that even after 700 years (almost) since its inception, the story and this variation are valuable as a famous story and as a little-known poem from a little-known poet in Turkish Islamic literature—Sheyyad Hamza.

Regarding the translation itself, Hickman took a direction which he says does not interfere with meaning but which does alter the structure of the poem. He writes that he took his cue from the narration of characters' dialogue—“Joseph said,” Jacob said,” “Zeliha said,” etc.—to turn the poem into something more akin to a drama. To look at the pages, one sees the names of characters in caps followed by “their lines”—even including a narrator who adds a

form of commentary to the story from time to time. I don't personally have any complaints about this, but it will be interesting if this poem is taken up again in the field and rethought again as a poem against this translation. This structure change is particularly worthy of note because on the title page, the text simply says, "Translated by Bill Hickman"—a short bit of language which really hides a lot of decision-making and thinking through the original Turkish text.

Bill Hickman has crafted a dense but not off-putting work of literary interest in *The Story of Joseph: A Fourteenth-Century Turkish Morality Play* by Sheyyad Hamza. In so doing, he hopes to draw attention to Turkish language and literature by contributing to the field something new (from the old).

JESSE A. LAMBERTSON

SULTAN QABOOS CULTURE CENTER LIBRARY

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*After Tomorrow the Days Disappear: Ghazals and Other Poems.* By Hasan Sijzi of Delhi; translated by Rebecca Gould. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016. Pp. xxvii, 109. ISBN: 9780810132306.

This book is a translation of selected poems of Hasan Sijzi of Delhi, including his *ghazal*, by Rebecca Gould, a reader in comparative literature and translation studies in the School of Modern Languages at the University of Bristol. Gould has also included an introductory section about Sijzi's life and his origin (thirteenth to fourteenth century) as well as the composition of his Persian poetry.

Sijzi's full name is Amir Najm al-Din Hasan Dihlavi ibn Khwaja 'Ala al-Din Sistani. His father, who was born in Sistan (eastern Iran and southern Afghanistan), also known as Sijistan, contributed to the poet's name "Sijzi," meaning from Sijistan. While his birth location is not exactly known, Sijzi spent most of his adult life in Delhi. He started writing poems at the age of thirteen and was greatly influenced by Persian poets such as Sa'di, the author of *Golestan* and a pioneer in the *ghazal* form, and Abu Saied Abu al-Khayr, famous for his quatrains (*ruba'iyat*) form. By the early modern period he was a central figure for both Indo-Persian literature and in the history of



Indian Sufism. The literary form of *ghazal* had a long history in Persian and Arabic literature, but it started to have an important impact on Sijzi's era, when Persian literature was becoming Indo-Persian literature.

Gould claims that Sijzi's poems, at a time when poetry was struggling within political sovereignty, created an atmosphere of spiritual longing through the prism of worldly desire. There were many meanings in his verses that seem to show erotic desire or spiritual love, and that define the shift from court poetry to Sufi poetry in Persian literature. It also indicated the historical shift in literary production and new sources of political power within the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526).

Sijzi was a good friend of the famous poet Amir Khosrow in the Delhi Sultanate, and their friendship was very much affected by their mutual relation to their teacher, Shaykh Nizam al-din (1238–1325). Gould described in her introduction the fact that Sijzi and Amir Khosrow extended the boundaries of Persian literature in part by incorporating Indic content into their verse. Their techniques and aesthetics actually set the stage for the merge of multilingual and cross-confessional innovations of later centuries. Hasan Sijzi, however, stayed more fully in the Persian aesthetic, and an example of this can be seen in his "Ishqnama" (Book of desire), which is an adaptation of an Indian story into a Persian narrative form.

Gould describes the use of *radif* as the most distinctive element of Persian poetry. *Radif* is basically a short phrase or word repeated at each line's end which produces a measured rhythm with different variations in meanings both in Persian and when translated into English. *Radif* appears twice in the first couplet, and then at least once at the end of every other couplet. Gould states that *radif* is empowered in the concluding verse in Persian poetry, where it includes the pen name (*takhallus*). On this account Sijzi refers to himself in the third person while also creating an imaginary listener/reader, which was a style used in the *ghazal* form during the thirteenth century.

In general, this book is a good source for any literary and poetry collection. It offers a blended Islamic Sufism and non-Islamic Indic tradition, similar to what Hafez and Rumi are best known for in the West. The collections are wisely selected in this book and they target a large audience interested in Persian poetry and specifically in *ghazal*. Its content enriches readers' cultural perception by opposing the readers to the harmony of repeating rhymes in *ghazal* forms.

Gould has professionally provided details using several examples of *radif*, and at the end of each *ghazal* she has also added the *radif* in transliterated Persian along with its English translation. The book includes fifty *ghazals*, seventeen quatrains, two fragments, and one ode from among Hasan Sijzi's works.

SHAHRAZAD KHOSROWPOUR

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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*Dispatches from the Arab Spring: Understanding the New Middle East*. Edited by Paul Amar and Vijay Prashad. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. Pp. 391, with bibliography and index. \$22.95. ISBN: 9780816690121.

*Dispatches from the Arab Spring: Understanding the New Middle East*, edited by Paul Amar and Vijay Prashad, is comprised of fourteen chapters, each covering a country in the Middle East and their varying degrees of participation in the Arab Spring of 2011 and beyond. Amar and Prashad have gathered essays from scholars, journalists, and activists that highlight their intimate knowledge of the country they are covering. The aim of Amar and Prashad is to "offer a comprehensive reintroduction to the entire region" (Amar, viii) and not just countries that were most discussed by mainstream media. To that end, they cover countries not typically thought of as Middle Eastern, such as the Sudan. The work of the book is also to acknowledge the scope of the Arab Spring beyond those initial moments of 2011 to emphasize the continual change happening in the region. They posit this scope is made up of three moments: Arab Spring, Arab Winter, and Arab Resurgence (Amar, xi). These moments happen at different times and ways, depending on the country in question. Most importantly, Amar and Prashad selected authors who would highlight "the stories from below that give us a sense of where these revolts came from, nudged on in the conjuncture by each other but driven by the structural forces that affect each society and each nation differently" (Amar, xiii). In doing so, several of the authors use interview material collected on the ground for their arguments. The book covers the countries in order of their entrée into the Arab Spring. In order they are: Tunisia, Egypt,

Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and Sudan.

As one might expect, the chapters vary in length and detail that often times correlates to the level of uprising that happened in each country. One finds lengthy chapters on Egypt, Libya, Syria, and, interestingly, Sudan. Each of these chapters would be an excellent primer on these countries for those not intimately familiar with their rich histories.

While the shorter chapters tend to cover countries that had small, easily quelled uprisings or no uprising at all, that is not true of the chapter on Tunisia. The chapter on Tunisia, the first in the book, is an excellent way to introduce the reader to this book and its aims. This chapter is the most hopeful in the book and clearly lays out why Tunisians turned against Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

As one reads the book certain themes about the reasons behind the Arab Spring begin to emerge. None of these themes are particularly groundbreaking but they do bear repeating for those who believe the uprisings are only to usher Islamists into power. In fact, one of the more powerful themes that emerge is that elevating Islamists to positions of power is often not what the people want. Other themes on why Arabs revolted include: dissatisfaction among younger generations across the Middle East, lack of access to education, lack of access to jobs, rampant corruption amongst leaders often too strongly tied to the West, the desire of those in power to do whatever it takes to maintain power, and lack of democratic elections. A very powerful theme that emerges is one in which certain Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia, involve themselves in the uprisings of other Arab countries in order to quell uprisings. An additional theme worth noting is that of groups previously opposed to each other, such as women's groups and Islamists, working together to overthrow their repressive governments. Often these mergers were short-lived but that they happen at all and in several different countries is often pivotal to the success, or lack thereof, of the uprising. A final theme that is touched on revolves around the influence of social media on the Arab Spring. Many essay authors address social media in different ways. However, the general consensus is that while social media was important, it was not a determining factor in most Arab Spring uprisings. Social media was used as a tool to spread messages and gather support but it is not the reason behind uprisings across the Middle East.

The one shortcoming of the book is that it is a snapshot of a very specific period of time. This book, published in 2013, is already out of date in terms of many of its predictions for the Middle East. There is no mention of ISIS and the chapter on Syria, while excellent for 2013, is in need of an update. In fact, I would enjoy reading an updated version of this book. I recommend this book for any academic library. This collection of essays could be incredibly useful to undergraduates, graduate students, and scholars in need of a well-written secondary source.

JALEH FAZELIAN

JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY

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*Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.* By Kinga Dévényi with Munif Abdul-Fattah and Katalin Fiedler. *Islamic Manuscripts and Books*, vol. 9. Leiden, Boston: Brill; Budapest: Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2016. Pp. 554. \$175.

The Ottoman Empire maintained a rather tenuous hegemony over what is now Hungary for about 150 years (1541–1699). During that time, the influence of Islam was extended throughout the region and a sizeable Muslim population remained even after the retreat of Ottoman power. Proof of this influence is evident in the number of manuscripts in Arabic found in various institutions in the modern state of Hungary. A large part of this legacy now has been made available in the recently published catalog of Arabic manuscripts held by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The authors have done a valuable service to the field by making these works accessible to students of Islamic history, Arabic literary history, and bibliography.

The Academy of Sciences was founded in 1830 by a group of Hungarian notables led by Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860). Shortly thereafter, Count József Teleki (1790–1855) donated his 30,000 books and manuscripts to the academy, forming the basis of its present collection. While the academy's library apparently contained books and manuscripts relating to the East (broadly defined) from at least the early nineteenth century, the decision to establish a distinct "Oriental Collection" dates only to the middle of

the twentieth century. Although the number of Arabic manuscripts held by the academy's library is relatively small (179 volumes containing a total of 306 works), it is the largest in Hungary. The earliest manuscript in the collection, on horsemanship and veterinary science, dates to 757/1356; the most recent two are from 1323/1905. One hundred forty-seven are dated works; some 46 date to the period of Ottoman occupation of Hungary and one (Arab O. 145/2) was actually composed in Buda.

The catalog opens with a brief history of the academy and its library, detailing the origins of the so-called "Oriental Collection" in particular. An account of the cataloguing efforts devoted to the Arabic manuscripts over the past century is also given here. The catalog proper is organized according to subject. Manuscripts focused on the "traditional" Islamic sciences—Qur'ān, ḥadīth, qur'ānic sciences, theology, and jurisprudence—are first, followed by sections devoted to mysticism, history, literature, the language sciences (syntax, morphology, lexicography, rhetoric), philosophy, logic, miscellanea (including encyclopediae, education, the classification of the sciences, horsemanship, and mathematics) and, finally, Christian books. Within each section, the works are arranged according to the death dates of the authors of the original works followed by the commentaries on those works also in chronological order. Anonymous works are located at the end of each section. There are eight useful indices: titles, authors, scribes, owners, dated manuscripts, place names, call numbers, and titles in collected works.

Descriptions of the individual works are extensive and detailed. They include the customary notes regarding extent and condition, page dimensions, paper characteristics, ink colors, script style and so forth. Incipits, explicits, and colophons are given in the original languages (some Ottoman Turkish and Persian works are found here as well). In addition, other very useful information is also presented. The dimensions of the written surface in each manuscript are given, as are the names of their various owners. Many of the manuscripts were bound or re-bound at some point and descriptions of the design and condition of these are offered. Mention is also made when marginal notes are present and the languages of such notations are indicated. When a work has received conservation treatment, that fact is also noted. While the people whose names are found on the owners' stamps and in the inscriptions are often unidentifiable at

present, the creation of such records may prove valuable in the future. References to the standard bio-bibliographical works in the field—Brockelmann, Zirikli, Kaḥḥālah—are provided, giving information about where additional copies of the works are to be found. The catalogue is enhanced by 92 illustrations of high quality that provide an idea of the appearance of the manuscripts and bindings.

Most importantly perhaps, when it is known under what circumstances a specific manuscript entered the collection, that information is presented—important for establishing provenance. Some of the early acquisitions were the result of “surplus” volumes being offered to the Academy by other Hungarian libraries and educational institutions. Others were donated by people of varying degrees of notoriety, from anonymous donors, to Hungarian nobility, citizens, and public servants, to the Turkish-Hungarian Imam ‘Abd al-Laṭīf (d. 1946), to Hungarian scholars of Islam and the Middle East such as Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913), among others. More than a quarter of the 306 manuscripts—78 in all—were obtained from Rafael Danglmajer, a Hungarian dealer in antiquities. According to Dévényi, he “seems to have acquired the Arabic manuscripts mainly from the members of the Muslim community in Hungary after the closure of their places of worship in 1949” (p. 7). In addition, there is a small number of manuscripts from North India and West Sumatra, donated by Gábor Korvin, a professor at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals.

In view of the descriptions of the manuscripts, it is clear that the collection is comprised primarily of “working texts,” that is, manuscripts that were used frequently, if not daily, for study and teaching or as standard references for questions of language, points of law, or religion. A large number of the manuscripts are incomplete, either having been damaged in the course of their lives or having not been completed by their copyists. The number of undated manuscripts might also suggest that many of these works were copied by madrasa students for whom the date of completion was not a matter of importance. But this point is what makes the collection so interesting, for the works represented provide a sort of literary-historical map, not only of Islam and its practice in the region that is today Hungary, but also of Hungarian intellectual engagement with the study of Islam.

This being the first printed catalog of Arabic manuscripts to be published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (an electronic catalog has been available since 2008), it is valuable for adding to the corpus of Arabic manuscripts recorded in other catalogs and bibliographical sources. The authors have done a thorough job of describing the manuscripts in the collection and putting them in their historical contexts. The level of detail in the descriptions of the marginalia is especially noteworthy. In terms of content, the catalog holds to a high standard of bibliographic description and scholarly evaluation.

Unfortunately, the publisher provided only an electronic version of the work for review so it has been impossible to fully evaluate the physical quality of the volume. The catalog would have benefited from more careful copyediting, but the errors found do not detract substantively from its overall value. The work should be seriously considered by librarians whose institutions own comprehensive collections of Arabic manuscript registries as well as those that focus on subjects such as Islamic art history. Overall, an admirable addition to the literature.

KARL R. SCHAEFER

DRAKE UNIVERSITY

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*The Book of Khalid: A Critical Edition.* By Ameen Rihani. Edited and with an introduction by Todd Fine. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2016. Pp. x, 530. ISBN: 9780815634041 (paperback).

This book is a critical edition of Ameen Rihani's *The Book of Khalid*, which was originally published in 1911. It is compiled and edited by Todd Fine, a cultural activist and a Ph.D. student of history at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

The original *The Book of Khalid* lays out the adventures of two young Lebanese men, Khalid and Shakib, who had left Lebanon to go to New York in the hope of a better life. It portrays the difficulties that they had to endure in their immigrant lives, which often ended with a humiliating and comic payoff. The original book is considered a unique contribution to American and world literature, since it was

the first Arab-American novel written by an Arab in English. Although a novel, it directly engages Islam, spirituality, and politics, and it suggests a dramatic vision of what Arab-American relations could have been politically and culturally at that point of history, near the collapse of the Ottoman order in the early twentieth century and afterward in the light of developments to come.

This book, which was published after the centennial anniversary of the original *The Book of Khalid*, includes the original text of its 1911 edition, Fine's detailed introduction, as well as several essays by scholars who argue that Rihani's work has tremendous relevance in the current political atmosphere.

Fine suggests that Rihani's works in general have remained almost unknown among American literary scholars because of Rihani's style and the diversity of genre in his works, and the exhaustive consumption of Arab immigrants in the early twentieth century. But one of the most powerful reasons, he suggested, might be Kahlil Gibran's (author of *The Prophet*) readership and fame as an Arab-American writer, which overshadowed Rihani's works.

The objectives of the essays in this book are to help new readers in three different directions: Rihani's literary influences, the work's themes and significance, and the historical and political context.

Some suggested that both Rihani and Gibran knew that reaching out to American readers needs special effort, not necessarily just their ability to write in English as a foreign language but mostly the ability to situate and connect themselves to readers who had already formed their ideas about their distant culture. Some criticized them for being engaged in self-Orientalization bringing Arab-American literature to an end, while others believed that this self-Orientalization actually served an important ideological function in the post-colonial era, where the Easterners have a position with the privilege of nurturing their culture within progress, modernity, and democracy; a position in which they can preserve Arab culture with a balanced mind and soul to be envied by the post-migrant generation of writers.

As far as the political and historical contexts are concerned, Rihani's thoughts and path, outlined in his book, place a political awareness and action about Syria and within its immigrants. It enforces the realization of Rihani's pluralism, which holds an attachment to Arab culture while also declaring loyalty to the United States. It also invites all Arab-Americans to teach their children pride in their ancestry. Rihani's work elaborates on the East-West



relationship within a narrative offering the ideas of reform, Arab unity, and spiritual and material notions that are important from literary, political, and historical points of view.

In *The Book of Khalid*, Rihani engaged himself in the issues of real-life experience and advocacy. Even within the controversial language he used in his novel, he managed to avoid any tone of resentment in order to fully capture “live without hatred.” His style emphasized “to observe and to respect” differences, even if not accepting them. This is still a valid path to follow today, even after over a century has passed from this book’s original publication.

This critical edition is a well-written book appropriate for any library. It has detailed analyses from different points of view addressing Rihani’s significant and innovative work, coinciding with contemporary Arab-American literature as well as Arab-American politics in the historical context of the novel.

SHAHRZAD KHOSROWPOUR

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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*The Shi’ites of Lebanon: Modernism, Communism, and Hizbullah’s Islamists.* By Rula Jurdi Abisaab and Malek Abisaab. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014. Pp. 350, with bibliography and index. \$49.95 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780815633723.

Rule Jurdi Abisaab and Malek Abisaab synthesize their research of more than a decade in this revisionist history of the Shi’ites in Lebanon. *The Shi’ites of Lebanon* challenges a prevailing narrative of Lebanese Shi’ism—and perhaps of Muslims more generally—that posits a neat divide between modernists and traditionalists. Local religious culture, in fact, interweaved in intricate ways with various strands of modernity in the form of reforms to Shi’ite traditionalism, Marxism, and Western ideologies.

The authors identify a gap in the current literature in that historians have not devoted sufficient attention to the Islamists’ relationship with religious modernism and Communism, as well as the influence and overlap of secular and religious concepts in the sectarian landscape of the modern Lebanese state. The main areas of inquiry involve the relationship of Shi’ites to the state, the influence of religion on left-wing ideologies, and the role of public religion in

relation to civil society and the state. The conventional analytical categories of “modernity” and “tradition” fall short, they assert, of capturing the nuances of all the forces at play in shaping the contemporary social and political scene. Islamists, as it were, exhibit features that could be described as both modern and anti-modern.

Beginning with peasant life under French colonial rule, the authors tell their story from the formation of the “Grand Liban” as a national homeland through rural disintegration and political marginalization beginning in the 1950s, conflict between Communists and Islamic jurists in the 1960s, the grassroots emergence of Hizbullah Islamists in the 1980s and ’90s, and the issuance of their second manifesto in 2009. They examine the intellectual shifts that took place throughout within their complex socioeconomic and political contexts. Biographical portraits are provided of some of the Islamists’ most important figures, such as current Hizbullah leader Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah and prominent jurist Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah.

The Shi’ites in the south of Lebanon, they argue, rejected the state at its inception due to their mistreatment by the French and the effects of militant Zionist activities. The legacy of colonialism, class, and local and national politics interacted in ways that shaped the revolts but also the discourse of religious reform and modernism. This discourse produced a religious Marxism, supported by Shi’ite notions of social justice and revolution, which promised to solve labor problems and push back against capitalist elites. Islamist jurists opposed the spread of Communism not only because of its plan to further privatize religion, but also because the wealth redistribution schemes envisioned by them threatened their financial interests. Through the conflicts with Israel, grassroots support for Palestinians, and inspiration from the Iranian revolution, the Islamists eventually gained ground over the Communists until the transformation of Hizbullah into a political entity occurred in the 1990s. The interests of wealthier classes of Shi’ites aligned with Hizbullah more so than the Communists, providing Hizbullah with a larger base of support beyond the Shi’ite poor. Throughout the development of the modern Hizbullah party, the authors demonstrate the subtle and complex ways in which politics and economics influenced conceptions of religion.

Looking at the present with a view towards the future, the authors end their history with a discussion of Hizbullah’s current relationship to modernity. The Islamists reject allegedly universal

ideas coming from the West, while at the same time they have developed their own understanding of what modernity means to them. They also maintain an uneasy relationship with the Lebanese state, whose secular apparatus contradicts their belief in *shari'ah* or divine law. This puts Hizbullah on a difficult path of challenging Western narratives while developing an internally coherent ideological project that can reconcile itself to the social realities in which they operate. The graduates of Hizbullah's seminaries will walk this path as they continue to synthesize traditional Shi'ite religious ideas with the demands of secular governance.

Overall, the book is a very detailed political history of the Shi'ites in Lebanon since the formation of the Lebanese state. It covers the main actors in the equation and brings a nuanced narrative in understanding the mutual influence of politics, economics, and religion in the formation of modern Shi'ite Islamist ideology. This book is most appropriate for the graduate level, as it assumes some knowledge and awareness of Lebanese and regional history. It will most interest researchers of Islamist, religious reform, and leftist movements, politics of the Middle East, and terrorism studies. A thorough bibliography points readers to many sources for further research.

JUSTIN PARROTT

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY IN ABU DHABI

## PARTINGTON AWARD FOR 2016 ANNOUNCED

CAMBRIDGE, MA (16 Nov., 2016)—The Middle East Librarians Association established the Annual David H. Partington Award in 2004 to grant public and tangible recognition to its members who have displayed a high standard of excellence and accomplishments in and contributions to the field of Middle East librarianship, librarianship in general, and the world of scholarship. Traditionally, nominations are solicited from library administrators of libraries where MELA members work.



The 2016 David H. Partington Award Committee (Jonathan Rodgers, University of Michigan, Chair; Evyn Kropf, University of Michigan; and Lior Sternfeld, Pennsylvania State University) decided to bestow the award on two exceptionally worthy nominees, namely **Roberta L. Dougherty**, Yale University, and **David G. Hirsch**, University of California Los Angeles. The committee considered several other deserving nominees as well and

settled in favor of two, because not awarding the prize to one or the other of these two top candidates would have been unjustifiable. Both Robin and David are unquestionably deserving. Their activities as librarians, scholars, and in giving generously to the profession, and especially to the Middle East Librarians Association, for many years has been devoted and is to be admired.

**Roberta L. Dougherty** has been the Librarian for Middle East Studies at Yale University since 2012. In her long and distinguished career, she has worked at the University of Texas Libraries, the American University in Cairo, the University of Oxford, the Library of Congress, the University of Pennsylvania, the United Arab

Emirates University Library, and the University of Michigan Library.

Robin studied at the University of Michigan, where she received the degree of Master of Information and Library Studies (M.I.L.S.) in 1993, and was inducted into Beta Phi Mu (the international library and information studies honor society); at Georgetown University, where she obtained the Master of Arts in Arab Studies (M.A.A.S.) degree from the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, concentrating in Arabic language and literature in 1988; and at the University of Pennsylvania for the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), cum laude, in Oriental Studies, with a concentration in Egyptology in 1982.

Robin has been praised as the consummate librarian, with deep background in collection development, public services, and technical services. She commands a breadth of knowledge about librarianship that is increasingly rare. She is also comfortable dealing with manuscript, print, and digital cultures; again, a range in which not all are competent. This versatility is what makes her an outstanding Middle East studies librarian, since the almost impossible expectation is that librarians in the field can “do it all,” even when the nations and cultures represented range so greatly historically and linguistically, and the students and scholars served have such varied interests and needs.

Her devoted service to the Middle East Librarians Association is unmatched and to be admired. She was two times its President (1999–2001 and 2014–2015). Additionally, she has taken an active role in the affairs of the Middle East Materials/Microfilm Project (MEMP).

We look with admiration at Robin as the very model of the scholar-librarian. She believes that librarians must work closely with the scholarly community they serve, both at the home institution and in the professional and scholarly organizations. She has frequently organized or chaired panels or presented papers at Middle East Studies Association annual meetings (at least ten times in the past decade, with another major presentation on the program at the 2016 meeting in November). She has also participated in other scholarly

conferences, both domestic and international. Robin's research focus has been popular arts and culture in the Middle East, particularly Egypt, and she has compiled an impressive record of presentation and publication in this area.

More recently, Robin has become engaged in the history of Oriental studies, as she focused on the scholarly career of Edward E. Salisbury, professor at Yale, library benefactor, and founder of the American Oriental Society. She has presented (or will present) papers and exhibit talks on Salisbury at MELCOM in Leiden, at the opening reception for the Salisbury 175th anniversary exhibit at Yale, and soon at MESA.

We, the David H. Partington Award Committee, with the membership of the Middle East Librarians Association, hereby commend you, Roberta L. Dougherty, and bestow on you an honor you well deserve, the 2016 Partington Award. Congratulations!

**David G. Hirsch** has been the University of California Los Angeles Librarian for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, simultaneously with Judaica and Armenian Studies, Central Asian Studies, and South Asian Studies, since 1989. Before and since coming to UCLA, David's distinguished career path included work, while on leave from UCLA, at the Abu Dhabi National Library, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2009–2011); Department of Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, UCLA (2002–2008, 2011– as Adjunct Assistant Professor); Zayed Central Library, United Arab Emirates University (1999–2000); Firestone Library, Princeton University (1987–1989, where he worked with Joan Biella); and the Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago (1984–1986, where he worked with his mentor, Bruce Craig, another Partington Awardee). Along the way, David has presented lectures and workshops for the Department of State in the UAE, Oman, Senegal, and Mali. He has presented papers at several MELCOM meetings, most recently in Leiden. Additionally, he has lectured and translated during two workshop programs for Iraqi librarians in al-Ain, UAE, and Amman, Jordan, in 2005 and 2006 as part of an NEH grant-funded program.

David studied at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (B.A., 1975–1980); University of Chicago (1984–1986, M.A. and M.L.S. 1990; Beta Phi Mu 1990); Università degli Studi di Venezia, Italy (Summer 1995); University of California Los Angeles (Summer Uzbek language and culture program, 1990); and Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey (Turkish language training program, Summer 1986). For David, the Center for Arabic Study Abroad played a very important part in his early training and career, where he spent 1980–1981 and 1981–1982 (CASA II).

During his notable career, David has worked at a level of astoundingly diverse responsibility, which is rather unusual for one librarian in a research university of such size and distinction as UCLA. As we know, however, David is no ordinary librarian. Indeed, he has excelled in handling each area in this complex portfolio of responsibility.

His linguistic proficiency is not limited to the primary languages of the Middle East, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew, but also extends to several others, as is well known and frequently demonstrated before us at international meetings and other settings where such proficiency is enviable and useful. Along with language expertise, David is able to exploit his facility with an array of cultures, in the Middle East and elsewhere. All these skills have provided him with access to people, places, and organizations around the world, a circumstance that enables networking, in-depth collection development, and international cooperation.

David's collection development voyages have taken him far afield internationally and have resulted in great successes in locating (thanks to his broad network of contacts) and acquiring, for UCLA and MEMP, unusual, unique, and valuable research materials, some of which ordinary librarians would not have considered. Through his reports at MELA and elsewhere, we are well aware of his many and frequent travels abroad, whether specifically for acquisitions or to board meetings of The Islamic Manuscripts Association, for example, to a conference, or privately on vacation. His frequent travels provide crucial opportunities to seek out and acquire interesting materials, including scarce items that would be of interest to collections beyond the social sciences and humanities focus, such

as UCLA's Biomedical Special Collections, Arts, Music, and East Asian libraries.

David G. Hirsch has served the profession, and in particular the Middle East Librarians Association, faithfully and admirably for his entire career. He was President of MELA two times (2011–2012 and 2001–2003), and Vice-President/Program Chair (2010–2011 and 1996–1997). His service extends more broadly to the Middle East Materials/Microfilm Project (MEMP) and the Islamic Manuscripts Association, among several other organizations. He has contributed to the MELA annual meeting program numerous times.

Among the honors and recognition bestowed on David G. Hirsch are the Dorothy Schroeder Award of the Association of Jewish Libraries of Southern California, in recognition of excellent service to the profession of Judaica librarianship, and the Librarians Association of the University of California-Los Angeles (LAUC-LA) 2013 Librarian of the Year Award. He has won numerous research grants and has published his work in reputable professional and academic journals, including in *MELA Notes*.

We, the David H. Partington Award Committee, with the membership of the Middle East Librarians Association, hereby commend you, David G. Hirsch, and bestow on you an honor you well deserve, the 2016 Partington Award. Congratulations!



**GEORGE N. ATIYEH PRIZE WINNER  
2016**

The George N. Atiyeh Prize Committee is pleased to announce this year's recipients, Baheya S. Jaber, Azatuhi Babayan, and Anthony Joyce. We received a number of qualified candidates this year and in the end the committee elected to award three recipients. In no particular order:

(1) Baheya S. Jaber is a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. She holds an M.B.A. from Birzeit University and is currently a Fulbright scholarship recipient to study in the U.S.A. She has worked as a librarian at the universities of Alabama, Arkansas, and Birzeit in different capacities.

(2) Azatuhi Babayan is currently an M.L.I.S. student at the UCLA School of Information Studies. She has experience working in a variety of museum and library settings, including working in the HBO archives, as a collections intern at the Wende Museum, and as a senior clerk in UCLA's Cataloging and Metadata center.

(3) Anthony Joyce is currently an M.L.I.S. student at UNC-Chapel Hill. He holds an M.A. in Middle East studies from U-Texas at Austin and a B.A. from Appalachian State, and spent a year at the American University in Cairo. He is currently a student librarian assistant at the Law Library of UNC and is developing an annotated list of children's books in Arabic for the local Arab communities of Chapel Hill.

Congratulations to this year's recipients.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sean E. Swanick (Chair)  
The George N. Atiyeh Prize Committee

**George Atiyeh Award Essay:  
The First Step towards Prosperity**

BAHEYA JABER

It's been a great opportunity for me to attend the MELA and MESA 2016 annual conferences. I am delighted to be the winner of the George N. Atiyeh Award for 2016, with two other recipients. It is my first time to attend such big conferences. I am so thankful for the George N. Atiyeh Committee members Sean Swanick, Robin Dougherty, and Heather Hughes, who selected me to be the recipient of this award. I am a second-year graduate student and a Palestinian Fulbright Scholar pursuing my master's degree in the field of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa. I got my previous degrees from Birzeit University-Palestine: an undergraduate degree majoring in Finance and Banking and minoring in Business Administration, and a master's in Business Administration. I was involved in library work; after getting my undergraduate degree, I started working at Birzeit University-Main Library in the Collection Development Department, while taking rotations at the Cataloging and Classification Department.

As a graduate student at the University of Alabama, I was a good candidate to apply for the George N. Atiyeh Award, since I worked at a library in the Middle East area. I am amazed at MELA's outreach to the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, whom they contacted regarding the Atiyeh Award. This outreach gave me the opportunity to be nominated by the school dean and by my thesis committee chair to apply for the Atiyeh award. I started the process with a strong belief that I will win the prize.

MELA and MESA gave me the opportunity to explore Massachusetts (Boston and Cambridge), meet Library Science (LS) students, library professionals in Middle East studies, researchers, vendors, and others. It was an opportunity to exchange experiences—to learn from these professionals and share my experience and research interest—communication that helped to

build a network for collaboration and work. In both MELA and MESA, I met the two other recipients of the George N. Atiyeh award. Since all of us are pursuing our master's degree in L.S. we got the opportunity to share our academic and professional experiences in the L.S. field, and to share our undergraduate, graduate, and work experiences. Also, at the MELA and MESA conferences I got the opportunity to meet many library professionals in Middle East Studies, researchers, national and international vendors, and to attend the vendors showcase and exhibit, and I had the opportunity to visit prestigious universities in Massachusetts such as Harvard University Law School Library and MIT Institute, where the MELA 2016 annual meeting was held. In addition, I was able to share my research interests with other library professionals. My research focuses on academic library trends in conflict zones, on which I hope to get the opportunity to present a paper at the MELA 2017 conference. Library professionals with whom I shared my research interests connected me with other professionals who worked on library projects in conflict zones. It's been a great opportunity for meeting, communicating, and networking with professionals, learning new things, and keeping updated within the profession. I was inspired by the collaboration that library professionals have through cooperating with their colleagues in doing their projects that will benefit the whole profession. Even though I am a library science student who is focusing on business librarianship, I got the opportunity to meet library professionals in Middle East Studies and even other professionals. I also learned that librarians of the 21st century need to have degrees other than the library science degree; learning languages is encouraged and gives the librarian more job opportunities.

Attending conferences is as important as doing internships, working, and pursuing academic degrees. All of these things work towards improving the librarian's skills. Presenting in a conference provides a great opportunity for other professionals to hear the latest research done in a specific field, and connect the researcher with others who are focusing on similar research topics for collaboration. Also, it may open the eyes of other professionals to start a new research path, depending on the gaps, lacks, and recommendations for further research that were not accomplished earlier. Such conferences give the researcher an opportunity to present to a wider community beyond their own institutions (even to professionals and

non-professionals in libraries and/or Middle East Studies). In MELA and MESA I expanded my learning beyond my profession by attending many presentations, workshops, and panel discussions. It is always great to learn something new and different from your profession; you will always find something interesting. This conference is also an opportunity for future career opportunities, since all conference attendees should market themselves (their academic and professional experiences, skills, and research interests).

I was fortunate to attend the MELA and MESA 2016 annual meetings in Massachusetts (Boston and Cambridge), since it was a cultural and professional experience. The MELA 2016 annual meeting was entitled “Partnerships enhancing opportunities,” which gave me the opportunity to hear many collaborative projects nationally between libraries in the United States and internationally between libraries in the US and abroad. A paper entitled “Surfacing distinctive digital collections: transforming roles for special collections and area studies librarians,” by Angela Fritz, discussed the “Fulbright source project” established in 2013 at the University of Arkansas Libraries, which focuses on access, availability, and flexibility through collecting and managing Fulbright information sources to enhance public-private collaboration. Another presentation by Sarah DeMott, entitled “Critical digitization practice: creating a model for transnational partnerships through Tunisian film posters,” focused on preserving cultural heritage (Egyptian film posters collected from Tunisia) through collaboration between the researcher at New York University and the local libraries through scanning, creating MARC records, etc., and returning the poster collection back to its cultural setting in Tunisia.

The MELA meeting was concluded with a vendors’ showcase, which gave attendees opportunities to see what products and services vendors are offering in the field of Middle East Studies, to become knowledgeable about the latest publications within this field, and to know new vendors in order to build strong future relationships.

The MESA conference offered more than 300 panel session discussions. It was so challenging for me to select which to attend of these panels, since there were many of them I was interested in attending but there was a time overlap. Even though I do not have any Middle East Studies background, I got the opportunity to be around many professionals in this field, and to explore a new study

area. I was inspired by the enormous number of researchers and professionals in Middle East Studies from the Middle East and the U.S.A.

During MESA, I attended many sessions including: “Alternative preservation practices of cultural heritage in the Middle East,” “Arabic study abroad in comparative contexts: towards an integrated approach,” “Did economic inequality drive the Arab spring? Qualitative approaches,” “Professional development workshop: proposal writing and research design: how to fund your ideas,” “Water and power politics: Palestine and Lebanon,” “The state and social conflict in Egypt under the Sisi regime,” and many others. These sessions taught me a lot about the Middle East and North African areas from the point of view of preserving their cultural heritage, the political situations in these areas, and struggles and conflict. Also, MESA provided a professional development workshop about proposal writing, which was a great opportunity for me to learn from an experienced professional. I enjoyed all the sessions I attended, especially “Arabic study abroad in comparative contexts: towards an integrated approach” and “Professional development workshop: proposal writing and research design: how to fund your ideas.”

The “Arabic study abroad in comparative contexts: towards an integrated approach” session included papers about different approaches to teaching Arabic language: focusing on the formal dialect, or immersion learning in the culture related to the language through extra-curricular activities (i.e., travelling and living in the foreign culture through study abroad programs, living with host families, watching films about the culture, and observing the culture of the learned language to increase students intercultural competence). Other papers focused on improving students’ language skills. Those papers were an amazing way to show the fascinating work that Arabic language teachers are doing to improve their students’ language skills in interesting ways (classroom and outside activities).

The workshop entitled “Professional development workshop: proposal writing and research design: how to fund your ideas” was a great session for graduate students pursuing their master’s and Ph.D. programs. This workshop focused on tips and the general components for writing a successful proposal. This workshop will

facilitate the process of applying for fund raising for my thesis research project.

In conclusion, the George N. Atiyeh Prize gave me a great opportunity to attend MELA and MESA conferences for my first time, meeting many library professionals in Middle East Studies, vendors, and other professionals; learning from them through the research they presented, projects they are involved in doing to improve their work, collaboration, and the network they have with other professionals; sharing my academic and professional experiences and my research interest with many professionals who helped me to get connected with other professionals working at libraries in conflict zones; and meeting other library school students and sharing our academic and professional experiences. MELA and MESA are the beginning of a long-term relationship with other professionals for future networking, collaboration, work, and research opportunities. I am currently working on my thesis research, which is entitled “Critical analysis of academic library trends in conflict zones”; I am enthusiastic to share it at the MELA 2017 conference. As a final note: Always believe in what you are doing and you will do it.

## **George Atiyeh Award Essay**

AZATUHI BABAYAN

As an emerging archivist, while obtaining my M.L.IS. from the University of California, Los Angeles, I found the call for applications to MELA's George N. Atiyeh Travel Award a sign that I may have a chance to merge my personal interest in Near Eastern studies with my professional goals. Having majored in English Literature during my undergraduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley, my foray into librarianship and archival studies never intersected with area studies in particular. However, exploring the nuances of memory and forgetting imposed by archival collections dealing with post-genocide populations, I naturally gravitated toward the everyday lives and long history of people in the Middle East and the diaspora. My time at both MELA and the Middle East Studies Association's annual conference proved to be an impactful and informative week engaging with professionals and scholars in the field.

The morning of the annual meeting of the Middle East Librarians Association was my first time attending a professional or academic program. Among all of the informative and illuminating presentations at MELA, a few stood out and aligned with my area of study at the time. The first talk of the morning, Mariette Atallah's "Content Distortion of Archival Sources," discussed some of the barriers and challenges faced while managing the collection at the American University of Beirut, including the historical coverage of material, geographical location of the collection, language barriers, and limitations to access such as restrictions and ignorance of materials. She also posed vital questions all archivists should ask themselves regarding the relationship between donors or collectors and the subject of the archival material, as well as ownership of the record. Heather Hughes' presentation on the Zahedi Papers at the Hoover Institution also raised questions on ownership, particularly the delicate balance between what is a personal record and what is a state record. Her emphasis on maintaining objectivity in language

while describing records—especially when subject to the whims of living donors and important historical considerations—shed light on the praxis of critical thought and archival practice. Mindful archival practice also featured in Angela Fritz’s presentation titled “Surfacing Distinctive Digital Collections: Transforming Roles for Special Collections and Area Studies Librarians.” The main point, that endangered archives are not about deterioration but about access, centralized the archivist’s responsibility to locate, assess, and process these materials while considering how one approaches them and handles the transfer of knowledge in a culturally sensitive manner. In all, the presentations on the first day of MELA left me buzzing and inspired and ruminating on my principles as an archivist well into the days, weeks, and months afterwards.

On the final day of the MELA conference, I watched members engage with one another to share successful projects and discuss goals as another day of presentations and meetings commenced. Sarah Demott’s presentation on critical digitization practice offered a new perspective on archivists’ relationship with researchers and where both must encroach into the other’s area of practice in order to provide detailed, accurate metadata to ensure access. Though I would have gained much valuable insight from the Endangered Libraries and Archives Committee meeting, I did not want to miss my chance to visit the Agha Khan Documentation Center, where I got to see original architectural drawings and sketchbooks from the Isfahan Urban History Project while it was being processed.

Even with three days of rich conversation and (on my part) wondrous observation of Middle East librarians, archivists, and scholars in action, I found myself gravitating toward more archive and preservation-oriented talks at the Middle East Studies Association annual conference. My experience at MESA culminated with the panel on Archival Practices, Violence, and Memory, which was held in a small room compared to its popularity with conference attendees. Sherene Seikaly’s presentation on “Palestine as Archive” struck me in particular, because libraries and archives are often targeted during conflict, with no exception regarding Israel’s violence against the state. Seikaly shifted the narrative to focus on a “repository of loss” that resists the settler colonialism working with an imperative to erase and edit the lives and history of Palestinians. My principles as a community-oriented archivist directly support their drive, as they stated, to collect stories that shape the present,



claim the past, and lay stakes in the future by building and nourishing an archive. In addition to this panel, I attended two roundtables that left an impression: “Knowledge Production, Inclusion, and Exclusion: Repositioning Armenians in Ottoman Turkish Historiography” and “Minority Regimes in Turkey.” Thus, I was inspired to enroll in a course at UCLA with Anne Gilliland entitled “Locating and Using Records as Evidence in Human Rights Activities,” where I had the opportunity to work on matters involving international human rights violations among a bright and talented set of colleagues. Throughout the course I researched secondary and primary resources in an attempt to trace the path my great-grandparents were forced to take to Aleppo, Syria, from their respective villages in Anatolia. In this sense, Seikaly’s phrase, “repository of loss,” hummed in the back of my mind as I attempted to reconstruct a narrative of my family’s loss through dispersed and oftentimes inadequate records.

Though I felt as though I was navigating the field on the margins as a first generation Armenian-American woman born in the United States and with no academic background in or linguistic knowledge of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, or other dominant languages of the Middle East, the welcoming nature of the MELA community ignited a spark to continue learning and expanding beyond my degrees. For that, I extend the deepest gratitude for the George N. Atiyeh Travel Award for seeing the potential in my eagerness and curiosity. Sharing the award with Bahia Jaber and Anthony Joyce was an honor, as I can only imagine nothing but success in their futures as information professionals. And finally, special thanks to Heather Hughes for her warmth and ongoing encouragement.

## **George Atiyeh Award Essay**

ANTHONY VINCENT JOYCE

My experiences at the Middle East Librarians Association and Middle East Studies Association Conferences in Boston, MA, were rewarding and plentiful. I am a current Master's student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the School of Library and Information Science and applied for the Atiyeh Prize on the recommendation of Roberta Dougherty, the Librarian for Middle East Studies at Yale University. My application was accepted by the Atiyeh committee, along with those of two fellow aspiring librarians, Azatuhi Babayan and Baheya Jaber.

My academic career began in Middle Eastern history and politics at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Because of my interest in politics and history, I successfully applied for a 2007 David L. Boren award for critical languages and national security and studied Arabic, political science, history, economics, and other subjects at the American University in Cairo. After taking a year off to work full-time at Trader Joe's, I was accepted to the University of Texas at Austin, where I pursued and completed my first master's degree. My thesis paper was on George Habash, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and I analyzed his movement's uncompromising style of politics within the framework of Albert Hourani's "Politics of the Notables" thesis. I contrasted Habash's intransigence toward Israel and the West with the comparative compliance of Yasser Arafat.

I was very excited about attending MELA/MESA, as I had never participated in an academic conference before (or even visited Boston) and thus I had a wealth of new experiences in a city rich with intellectual laborers and the fruits of their work. I arrived in Boston on a Sunday evening and was welcomed by an old friend who works at MIT, which was fortunate, as that is where the MELA conference took place. Our first session began early Monday and was housed within the MIT Media Lab, an enormous glass-and-concrete complex in downtown Cambridge. Socialization was the order of the

day; I sought to introduce myself to some of the scholars and researchers who attended and to learn about their reasons for attending. Our first order of business was to honor the life and work of David Giovacchini, the Middle East and Islamic Studies Librarian at the University of Pennsylvania. I could tell that the attendees were deeply saddened by Mr. Giovacchini's passing, and they reflected on his work and personality at length. It was a moving testament to the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual bonds that unite our profession.

All of the MELA presentations are worthy of mention, as each of them analyzed an understudied aspect of library sciences in the Middle Eastern context. For example, Mariette Atallah of the American University of Beirut analyzed how archival content from the French Mandate in Syria was preserved by diligent archivists such as Emir Maurice Chehab, but she also addressed how these sources might become distorted through translation or by the intellectual commitments of successive generations. Guy Burak of NYU and Joan Weeks of the Library of Congress showcased a splendidly rich collection of photo albums, donated to the LOC in the late 19th century by Sultan Abd al-Hamid II of the Ottoman Empire. These books were magnificently bound in red and ornately decorated but had deteriorated significantly over time. This project showcased the important work that librarians undertake to preserve cultural heritage across and between international and cultural lines.

One project that particularly interested me was Heather Hughes's presentation entitled "The Ardeshir Zahedi Papers: Community Building through Collections." This project (which is a closed collection until completion) analyzes the archives and personal papers of Ardeshir Zahedi, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to the United States during the Pahlavi regime. Ms. Hughes's research captivated me both because I am seeking to expand my knowledge of Iranian history, but also because my own father may well have met Zahedi during his time working in the U.S. State Department in Iran. Whether his impact was for good or ill I do not know, but this project addressed important questions about archival work in recent history: to what extent are our archival findings subject to self-censorship for the sake of the safety of others, or for other considerations not related to research? I have my own hypothesis on that question but that is a query for a different article.

Finally, I would be remiss to ignore my experience at MESA. It took place in downtown Boston at the Copley Place Marriott and was something of a controlled riot! I was fortunate to meet several of my colleagues from the University of Texas at MESA, including Lior Sternfeld of Penn State University. I attended multiple presentations, ranging from a panel on the rights, attitudes, and self-descriptions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, to Turkish immigration policy vis-a-vis the Syrian refugee crisis, to a delightful panel on the politics of comparison within colonial-era radio broadcasts and local reactions and reformulations of the content of these broadcasts. Perhaps the most exhilarating part of my journey to Boston was our tour of Harvard Law School Library and Widener Library, which were labyrinthine structures with enormous collections. I feel very fortunate to have been accepted for the Atiyeh Prize and look forward to returning to the conferences next year.

**Annual Meeting 2016 Cambridge, MA**

**MELA Business Meeting**

**November 16, 2016**

**MIT, Bartos Theater (E15 00LA), 20 Ames Street**

**MELA MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** JOHN DUNCAN ARDEN-KIMMEL, MARIETTE ATALLAH, NORA AVETIAN, AZATUHI BABAYAN, RIFAT BALI, NEDIM BALI, RANDALL BARRY, JOYCE BELL, JAMILEH BITAR, ABDELAALI BOUTAQMANTI, GUY BURAK, DALE CORREA, PHILIP CROOM, IMAN DAGHER, JULIA DE MOWBRAY, AMED DEMIRHAN, SARAH DEMOTT, HIRAD DINAARI, ROBIN DOUGHERTY, JOHN EILTS, GEORGE FAWZY, JALEH FAZELIAN, GAYLE FISCHER, MERYLE GASTON, MICHAEL GROSSMAN, BALSAM HADDAD, DAVID HIRSCH, MICHAEL HOPPER, PAMELA HOWARD-REGUINDIN, HEATHER HUGHES, BAHIA JABIR, MOZHGAN JALALZADEH, ANTHONY JOYCE, AKRAM KHAIBULLAEV, IMAN KHAMIS, WILLIAM KOPYCKI, ADEL LABIDI, JESSICA LAGAN, CONNIE LAMB, MICHELLE LYNCH, PETER MAGIERSKI, LAILA HUSSEIN MOUSTAFA, YOSRA MUDAWI, AHMED OSAMA, JUSTIN PARROT, MEHDI RAHIMZADEH, TIMOTHY RESCH, ANDRAS RIEDLMAYER, AJ ROBINSON, JONATHAN RODGERS, MATTHEW SABA, JULIET SABOURI, ANAIS SALAMON, MARLIS SALEH, KARL SCHAEFER, VIRGINIA SHIH, RACHEL SIMON, SHARON SMITH, DENISE SOUFI, AMANDA STEINBERG, IAN STRAUGHN, BASSEM SULAIMAN, SEAN SWANICK, ASUMAN TEZCAN, MICHAEL TOLER, PATRICK VISEL, JOAN WEEKS, JAMES WEINBERGER, STEPHEN WILES, EMILY WITSELL

The business meeting started at 1:00 p m.

The minutes from the 2015 business meeting were approved.

**OFFICER REPORTS***PRESIDENT'S REPORT:*

Jaleh thanked the members of the new Social Media Committee for promoting activities of MELA and its membership through various channels. Members interested in contributing can do so via [social.media@mela.us](mailto:social.media@mela.us). Jaleh also highlighted MELA's new logo and website, brought about through the efforts of the website design committee led by Jaleh along with webmaster Justin Parrot, plus Joan Weeks and William Kopycki, through the services of Madeline Fix, a web design consultant. She also thanked Sharon Smith and Michael Toler for hosting MELA's meeting this year. MELA's sponsors this year included Bloomsbury Academic, Cambridge Archive Editions, Dar Mahjar, Duke University Press, Eastview, Ferdosi Books, Gale, IranFarhang, Leila Books, Libra Books, and Suleiman's Books. Jaleh encouraged those present to attend the Vendor Showcase.

Jaleh thanked Michael Hopper for filling the member-at-large position previously held by the late David Giovacchini.

Jaleh announced that the Bylaws Committee will convene again, chaired by Robin Dougherty along with Michael Hopper, with the aim of patching any additional holes in the bylaws. She asked for volunteers to serve as MELA's parliamentarian. Please let Sharon or Jaleh know if interested.

*VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT:*

Sharon Smith thanked everyone who made this year's meeting possible. The theme of partnership is a vital one, especially in light of the volume of data that needs to be managed, which is no task for a single institution. She welcomed any feedback on this year's program and looks forward to serving as president of MELA for the next term.

*SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT:*

William Kopycki reported that MELA's treasury remains stable. MELA should pay attention to the JSTOR royalties we receive as this is now a significant source of funds. The vast majority of expenses continue to be the annual meeting and *MELA Notes*. He suggested having a voluntary/external audit done to ensure compliance with tax-exempt status. Over this past year, 17 names were added to the MELA database, with total membership of 116 as

of the time of the meeting. Other statistics and figures are included in the Treasurer's Report [appended to these minutes].

*MELA NOTES EDITOR'S REPORT:*

[The full text of the report is appended to these minutes.] Marlis Saleh reported that during the year 2016–17, one annual issue of *MELA Notes*, number 89 (2016), will be printed and distributed to the membership and subscribers. The issue will appear on the website, and features an assortment of articles and book reviews. All book reviews that will be published in the 2016 issue have already been posted online in the *MELA Notepad*. Eventually all reviews will be posted on the blog shortly after they are submitted, and then subsequently published in an issue of *MELA Notes*.

The latest issue of *MELA Notes* (number 88, 2015) was sent to JSTOR for digitization and inclusion in their database. The full run of *MELA Notes* is available as part of the Arts & Sciences IX Collection. Revenue sharing from JSTOR brought in \$3,546.44 this past year, which includes a supplement of \$2,000.00 for not imposing a moving wall. *MELA Notes* is also available in EBSCO Host's Library & Information Science Source Publications database, beginning with issue 84 (2011) and going forward. It is possible that in the future a more extensive backfile will also be added. The electronic files for issue 89 (2016) have been sent. Increasing our journal's visibility, the full text is shared with non-EBSCO discovery services for indexing and searching (but not display), making the articles easier for researchers to find, regardless of what discovery service their library uses.

Marlis thanked Jonathan Rodgers, past editor of *MELA Notes*, book review editor Rachel Simon, and secretary-treasurer William Kopycki for their work on producing the journal, and urged membership and their colleagues to submit articles.

*BOOK REVIEW EDITOR'S REPORT:*

Rachel Simon reported that many books have been received for review, and reviewers have followed through with completed reviews. She encouraged new members to participate in this activity. She cited David Giovacchini as an example of someone who conscientiously sent in book reviews on time and also gave suggestions for books, or books following a particular theme, to be reviewed. She said she would contact publishers if someone had a

request to review a specific book and if that person had a proven track record of sending completed reviews on time.

*WEBMASTER'S REPORT:*

Justin reported on the re-design of the MELA website, done using the WordPress content management system. WordPress is very efficient and easy to manage at both back and front end. He also arranged to upgrade the hosting account, resulting in increased security and speed. Future webmasters will not need to know website coding to perform maintenance. The full report of the website redesign committee is available on the *MELA Notepad* blog. The Social Media Committee has also worked hard to develop content, and integrated the Twitter and Facebook accounts, which helped increase the reach and connections made when MELA publishes materials this way. The website is a collaborative effort; he thanked those who gave suggestions and encouraged any feedback for further improvement of MELA's website and social media.

*LISTSERV MANAGER'S REPORT:*

Jaleh gave the report on behalf of Evyn Kropf, who was unable to attend the meeting. All are reminded of the virtual community that is the MELANET-L listserv, which is intended for discussion of issues directly relevant to Middle East librarianship but notably excludes discussion of vendor relations and commercial advertisements. There are currently 528 subscribed email addresses (some members are subscribed under multiple addresses). Evyn added roughly 35 new subscribers since last year's MELA meeting. Around 7 colleagues that have moved on to other fields, retired, etc., requested to be unsubscribed from the list. All are reminded that MELANET continues to be archived by both Gmane and Google Groups. All should note that the Gmane archive is public and searchable over the open web.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*BYLAWS COMMITTEE:* Iman Dagher reported that the committee, comprising Brenda Bickett, John Eilts, Kristen Kern, Mariette Atallah Abdel-Hay, and herself, worked through emails on the revisions of the bylaws. They agreed on twelve revisions that were posted on the website and announced through the listserv for discussion on June 29, 2016. No comments or questions were



received. Revisions were added to the electronic ballot along with the rationale for each revised item.

The e-vote on the proposed amendment opened on October 2, 2016, and closed on November 11, 2016. Voting participation was 59.8%: 87 ballots sent; 52 voted. Of the 52 votes, more than 91% were in favor of the amendment passing. The amendment thus passed with a simple majority of votes, as prescribed in the bylaws. The revised bylaws are now available on the website.

Some recommendations for future committee members: discussing bylaws changes through email can be difficult; in order to have a more efficient discussion and to better facilitate the process, Iman recommend using Hangout, Zoom, Skype, or any other online meeting platform. She said the committee also recommends revisiting bylaws article IV, section 8. C, D, and E, and to consider moving the administrative aspects of Atiyeh, Partington, and the M. Lesley Wilkins award committees to the MELA manual in order to add more flexibility in the terms and guidelines of the committees, and to apply needed changes without having to revise the bylaws.

*WILKINS AWARD COMMITTEE:* Robin Dougherty announced this year's winner, Jonathan Rodgers (retired, University of Michigan). She highlighted his outside contributions to the field, including serving as editor of both the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* and *MELA Notes* for over 10 years. He also served as mentor to many students and interns, including Robin and his successor at Michigan, Evyn Kropf. For his part, Jonathan thanked the committee. Jonathan mentioned that he started at Michigan as John Eilts' successor, with David Partington preceding John. Jonathan said he takes modest pride in the students (many of whom have since gone on to bigger places) he taught in his course on Middle East bibliography, and then explained how the course developed over the years. He gave thanks to all for being honored in this way.

*PARTINGTON AWARD COMMITTEE:* Jonathan Rodgers served as chair and presented this year's award. This year, the award went to two persons: Roberta Dougherty and David Hirsch. Roberta L. Dougherty has been the Librarian for Middle East Studies at Yale University since 2012. In her long and distinguished career, she has worked at the University of Texas Libraries, the American University in Cairo, the University of Oxford, the Library of

Congress, the University of Pennsylvania, the United Arab Emirates University Library, and the University of Michigan Library. Robin studied at the University of Michigan, where she received the degree of Master of Information and Library Studies (M.I.L.S.) in 1993, and was inducted into Beta Phi Mu (the international library and information studies honor society); at Georgetown University, where she obtained the Master of Arts in Arab Studies (M.A.A.S.) degree from the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, concentrating in Arabic language and literature in 1988; and at the University of Pennsylvania for the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), cum laude, in Oriental Studies, with a concentration in Egyptology, in 1982. Her devoted service to the Middle East Librarians Association is unmatched and to be admired. She was twice its President (1999–2001 and 2014–2015). Additionally, she has taken an active role in the affairs of the Middle East Materials/Microfilm Project (MEMP).

David G. Hirsch has been the University of California Los Angeles Librarian for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, simultaneously with Judaica and Armenian Studies, Central Asian Studies, and South Asian Studies, since 1989. In addition to his position at UCLA, David's distinguished career path included work, while on leave from UCLA, at the Abu Dhabi National Library, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2009–2011); Department of Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, UCLA (2002–2008, 2011– as Adjunct Assistant Professor); Zayed Central Library, United Arab Emirates University (1999–2000); Firestone Library, Princeton University (1987–1989, where he worked with Joan Biella); and the Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago (1984–1986, where he worked with his mentor, Bruce Craig, another Partington Awardee). Along the way, David has presented lectures and workshops for the Department of State in the UAE, Oman, Senegal, and Mali. He has presented papers at several MELCOM meetings, most recently in Leiden. Additionally, he has lectured and translated during two workshop programs for Iraqi librarians in al-Ain, UAE, and Amman, Jordan, in 2005 and 2006 as part of an NEH grant-funded program. David studied at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (B.A., 1975–1980); University of Chicago (1984–1986, M.A., and M.L.S. 1990; Beta Phi Mu 1990); Università degli Studi di Venezia, Italy (summer 1995); University of California, Los Angeles (summer Uzbek language and culture program, 1990); and Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey

(Turkish language training program, summer 1986). For David, the Center for Arabic Study Abroad, where he spent 1980–1981 and 1981–1982 at CASA II, played a very important part in his early training and career. David G. Hirsch has served the profession, and in particular the Middle East Librarians Association, faithfully and admirably for his entire career. He was President of MELA two times (2011–2012 and 2001–2003), and Vice-President/Program Chair (2010–2011 and 1996–1997). His service extends more broadly to the Middle East Materials/Microfilm Project (MEMP) and the Islamic Manuscripts Association, among several other organizations. He has contributed to the MELA annual meeting program numerous times.

*COMMITTEE ON CATALOGING:* Nora Avetyan presented the report. Non-roman scripts in cataloging records were a significant topic over the past year, noting that OCLC has some script-only records in WorldCat. They also discussed extending non MARC-8 character sets in WorldCat as well as authority records. Gary Strawn (Northwestern University) gave the committee a demonstration of his Authority Record Toolkit and what it can do with non-Roman script data. The committee discussed new developments in recording series statements. A workshop on linked data/BIBFRAME will be held during this year's meeting, presented by Joyce Bell.

As for the Arabic NACO Funnel, this past year member libraries contributed 988 new name authority records, revised 729 records, and created 143 new series records. The committee thanked Allen Maberry of Library of Congress' Middle East Cataloging Section for his help and support to the Funnel.

*CATALOGING AND CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE:* Asian and African Materials (CC:AAM) of the American Library Association (Iman Dagher is currently chair and MELA representative) reported that all of the Unicode characters will be accepted in OCLC's WorldCat by the end of 2016. Morocco is joining the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF). BIBFRAME includes consideration for non-Roman scripts.

*EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM:* Connie Lamb gave the report on behalf of the committee. The main activity the committee was working on was the Middle East librarianship course

taught at Simmons College, School of Library and Information Science. The course was taught online in 2015; however, Simmons decided not to offer the course this year. The mentorship program has gone well, with three requests over the year and two others who have expressed interest during this meeting. Mentors and mentees will be paired up after the meeting. The committee's web page has a number of resources available for those who are new to the field.

*ENDANGERED LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE:* Dale J. Correa and Laila Hussein Moustafa gave the report. The committee has been discussing cooperative collecting for the purpose of preservation, asking MELA member institutions to seek grant funding through our individual institutions to support this initiative. The committee is also interested in web archiving, also in the planning phase.

The committee is planning a workshop on preservation, digitization, and disaster management; as such it seeks strategic partnerships with libraries and archives in the Middle East to inform our planning through advice and suggestions. For member activities: Dale presented at the inaugural UT Antiquities Action conference on post-custodial modes of digitization and collection development that benefit preservation and disaster management concerns (article on digitization and national libraries and archives coming out in *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture* in Spring 2017). Laila gave several presentations, including "From Vietnam to Syria: Refugees, Their Stories, and the Role of Librarians," at ALA, Orlando, FL, June 25, 2016; and "Who Can Save our Cultural Heritage in Time of War: The Case of Mosul in Iraq," at the 6th International Disaster and Risk Conference IDRC Davos, 28 August–1 September 2016, Davos, Switzerland. She also published "From Peshawar to Kabul: Preserving Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage during Wartime," *Rare Book Manuscripts and Cultural Heritage Journal, College & Research Libraries* 17:134–137, and is planning and hosting a second workshop on Arabic manuscripts in Africa at Northwestern as a collaborative Title VI project with the University of Illinois.

*MEMP:* There was no MEMP report this year.

*NOMINATING COMMITTEE:* Ian Straughn announced the election results: MELA Vice President/Program Chair: Akram Khabibullaev;

*MELA Notes* Editor: Marlis J. Saleh; MELA Secretary/Treasurer: William Kopycki; MELANET Listserv Manager: Evyn Kropf; MELA Member-at-Large: AJ Robinson. In line with the spirit of the U.S. presidential elections, Ian's announcement was delivered with great comic relief.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Michael Hopper announced that there would be tours of Harvard Law and Widener libraries later in the day.

Meryle Gaston announced that her position at UC-Santa Barbara will be open following her retirement, and that she would be available to talk to interested candidates.

Sharon Smith introduced Matthew Saba, who will be joining the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT as digital resources librarian.

Peter Herdrich and Elizabeth Waraksa gave a brief announcement about the proposed Digital Library of the Middle East, created in development with the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) and Antiquities Coalition, both based in Washington, D.C. The project is funded with a grant from the Mellon Foundation. The project aims at creating an open-source repository for collections from the Middle East, as well as tracking collections with the aim of preventing illegal trafficking and looting.

Robin Dougherty invited those MELA members going to MESA to attend her panel on Edward Salisbury and 175 years of the study and teaching of Arabic at Yale.

Mariette Atallah announced that the OACIS Project for Middle East serials and holdings, formerly hosted by Yale University, will be re-launched at the American University of Beirut. The website will be posted on the MELA Listserv.

Virginia Shih announced that the position of Middle East Librarian was now open at UC-Berkeley.

With no further business, Jaleh announced the close of the meeting, which adjourned just after 1:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Kopycki  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2016  
(November 15, 2015–November 4, 2016)**

**INCOME**

Dues, subscriptions	\$2,724.89
JSTOR royalties from <i>MELA Notes</i>	3,546.44
2015 (remainder) and 2016 meeting registration	3,951.35
2015 (remainder) and 2016 MELA dinner	1,853.49
2015 (remainder) and 2016 meeting sponsorships	3,086.30
Mailing list rental (3 lists)	486.50
Bank interest	0.77
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$15,649.74</b>

**EXPENSES**

MELA 2015 meeting expenses	\$3,177.21
MELA 2016 meeting expenses	300.00
2015 Atiyeh Awards	490.00
2015 MELA Dinner (Maggiano's)	1,771.08
<i>MELA Notes</i> #88 printing and mailing	1,417.42
Photocopying and printing	52.35
Supplies (name badges, etc.)	143.55
Webhosting renewal	84.00
Website development	4,549.00
Refund (registrations)	85.19
Bank fees	81.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$12,150.80</b>

**PNC Bank Checking account as of November 4, 2016** \$21,004.23

**PNC Bank Savings account balance as of November 4, 2016** 5,442.35

**PayPal Account Balance as of November 14, 2016** 29,058.48

**TOTAL** **\$55,505.06**

**Wilkins Fund to date (included in account totals above)** \$14,802.02

As of November 4, 2016, MELA has 90 members paid up through 2016. 61 members are paid or renewed until 2017. 17 new names have been added to the database since November 15, 2016. Total membership count at the time of the 2016 meeting is 116.

As of November 4, 2016, there are 6 library subscriptions to *MELA Notes*.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Kopycki  
Secretary-Treasurer

### Editor's Report, November 2016

During the year 2015–16, one annual issue of *MELA Notes*, number 89 (2016), will be published in print and will be distributed to the membership and subscribers. The issue will appear electronically at <http://www.mela.us/publications/mela-notes/mela-notes-archive/>.

The current issue will consist of the following items:

- ❖ “Benefits and Challenges of Outreach in Academic Libraries: A Case Study at the McGill Islamic Studies Library,” by Anaïs Salomon, McGill University
- ❖ “Magic, Moses and Manuscripts: the Digital Archaeology of a Timbuktu Text,” by Ian Straughn, Brown University
- ❖ “Archival Research in Iran and Afghanistan,” by Shivan Mahendrarajah, American Institute of Afghanistan Studies
- ❖ “‘Classics’ in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (MEIS): Bibliometric Indicators and Collection Assessment of Monographs,” by Mariette Atallah Abdel-Hay, American University of Beirut
- ❖ “From the Old Medina to the World: A Summary and Assessment of Efforts to Make the Collection of the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies More Widely Available,” by Michael Toler, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- ❖ Obituary of David Giovacchini, by John Eilts, Stanford University
- ❖ 16 Book Reviews
- ❖ Books Received for Review 2015–16
- ❖ Award Announcements and Essays
- ❖ MELA Business Meeting 2015 Minutes and Reports

All book reviews that will be published in the 2016 issue have already been posted online in our newly revived blog, the *MELA Notepad*. As I catch up with the backlog of more recently received reviews, all reviews will be posted on the blog shortly after they are submitted, and then subsequently published in an issue of *MELA Notes*.



The latest issue of *MELA Notes* (number 88, 2015) was sent to JSTOR for digitization and inclusion in their database. The full run of *MELA Notes* is available as part of the Arts & Sciences IX Collection. Revenue sharing from JSTOR brought in \$3,546.44 this past year, including a supplement of \$2,000.00 for not imposing a moving wall.

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I am extremely grateful for the assistance of my colleagues Jonathan Rodgers, past editor of *MELA Notes*, our book review editor, Rachel Simon, and our secretary-treasurer, William Kopycki.

As always, I urge the membership to submit articles and to encourage colleagues to do so.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marlis J. Saleh, Editor