

MELA NOTES

Middle East Librarians Association

Number 93 (2020)

MELA NOTES
Journal of Middle Eastern Librarianship
Number 93 (2020)

ISSN 0364-2410

PUBLISHED BY THE MIDDLE EAST LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION

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Number 93

2020

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Brief Communication

EDWARD A. JAJKO
HOOVER INSTITUTION ON WAR, REVOLUTION AND PEACE
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

There are two true stories that I think should be remembered by all MELA members. Those who were at the organizational meeting at SUNY Binghamton in 1972 will recall the second one that I present below. I have never forgotten it and even now, after the passage of some 48 years, smile or even laugh when the story comes to mind. The story is actually Jalal Zuwiyya's, whose permission I requested to submit it to *MELA Notes*. In his letter of October 25, 2020, Jalal says "Yes, by all means, you can print in the Melanotes whatever you stated in your letter. You have my permission and support."

The first story is something that happened to me, personally, some 50 years ago. As soon as possible afterwards, I told it to my wife Pam, and it has remained part of our marital verbal shorthand ever since. Over the years I have told it to various people, but in general reserved it in the thought that someday I might apply for a position as head of collection development somewhere. It had been my experience that, for such jobs, the candidates are expected to give a public talk, to show that they can put sentences together and read intelligibly or at least read what someone else has written for them. My plan was that someday I might give such a talk, in the manner of a New England divine, presenting a sermon on a text, that text being the concluding lines of this story. (Let me add that, although this true story occurred some 50 years ago, I remember various lines of dialogue verbatim.)

My wife Pam and I met in the Columbia University School of Library Service. After some months of dating, we decided to marry, and did so in August, 1970, a month after I began my job as Near East Bibliographer-Cataloguer in the Yale University Library. Pam came from Indiana and I was from Philadelphia. We were married in that city and many members of her then extremely large extended family came East for the wedding. But a large number were unable to. They were farmers, unable to leave the land, or otherwise could

not make the trip. So at the earliest possible opportunity, we left New Haven and headed out to Indiana, so that I could meet the rest of the family and quite literally see where my wife had come from.

In those days, my wife's maternal grandmother, Grandma Thornburg, although advanced in years, owned and operated a restaurant in the farmlands south of Muncie. Because it was a restaurant and the largest enclosed space owned by anyone in my wife's family, that was where they tended to hold family reunions and holiday dinners. That particular holiday, while the family occupied the large area in the back next to the steam tables, the front of the house was open and fully occupied with farmers who had come in from the field for dinner—Hoosier for “lunch.” I remember standing in the back, talking with my four new brothers-in-law, when I suddenly felt Grandma Thornburg loop her arm around mine. “Come on over here; I want you to meet some friends of mine.”

She took me to the front of the restaurant, where farmers in their work clothes were discussing the events of the day over their lunches, and went to one table and interrupted two farmers, saying that they were good friends of hers and that she wanted to introduce me to them: “This is Pam's boy.” Then she left me alone with them. They were gracious and conversed with me, asking questions about where I was from, what I did, etc. In those days, I was full of pride over my new job at Yale and, had I been wearing something with lapels and been burnishing my fingernails, would have worn them all down.

One of the farmers asked where I worked, and with overweening pride and smugness, I said, “Yale University,” to which he replied, “I've heard of that place.” Then we got down to specifics. What did I do at Yale? I explained as best as I could; and those were early days in my job as Near East Bibliographer-Cataloguer, and my responsibilities increased afterwards.

Finally, the farmer who had said “he had heard of that place” asked, “How many books you got in that there library of yours?” Quoting the statistics of the day, I proudly replied, “Seven and a half million.” To which he immediately responded, “Shoot, who's gonna read all them books?”

These last few lines are the ones I would have spoken on with regard to collection development, which was always my greatest interest in library work. The US and other countries have massive

libraries. Is all that stuff really needed? Is all that “scholarly” publication really needed? Shoot, who’s gonna read all them books?

The other story, Jalal Zuwiyya’s story, is one that he has given me permission to offer to *MELA Notes*. I believe it is truly a MELA story, one that deserves to be remembered through the years. It was told by Jalal at the very first meeting of MELA, the organizational meeting held at SUNY Binghamton in 1972.

At that meeting, Jalal was our host librarian and perhaps inadvertently established a very nice tradition that lasted for many years, that of the host librarian offering words about the local collection, the program served, and whatever else was thought worth mentioning. This was always interesting and enlightening.

At that first meeting, Jalal spoke about his library collection and the program he served. In those days, SUNY Binghamton had anticipated today’s world of political correctness. On that campus, there was no Middle East or Near East Center, Department, or Program. Instead, Binghamton had a program in South West Asia and North Africa studies. This was universally known by its acronym as the SWANA program. Then Jalal brought down the house.

He told us that, one day, he was working in his office in the SUNY Binghamton library, with his door shut. He said that on his door were his name, Dr. Jalal Zuwiyya, and the words “SWANA Librarian.” He said that there was a quiet knock on the door, so he called out a “come in.” The door opened partway and the head of a student poked around the opening. Jalal asked if he could help the student. “Yes, sir; could you please say a few words for me in Swahili?”

Information Literacy in the Arabic Language Classroom

AJ ROBINSON

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Introduction

At Washington University in St. Louis, we had a unique opportunity to test information literacy instruction in a Beginning Arabic class. The literature related to information literacy and second language instruction primarily focuses on teaching English, rather than what is often called foreign or world languages at North American English-language universities and colleges. With the assistance of a university program focused on information literacy, my colleague Dr. Younasse Tarbouni and I co-designed two assignments for first-year students in their second semester of Arabic. While our work and assessment were interrupted by the mid-semester shift to online instruction in the global COVID-19 pandemic, findings suggest that further development would have positive impact for student experience and their future engagement with Arabic materials.

Background

The Information Literacy Learning Community for Faculty and Librarians (ILLC)¹ is an internal university partnership with the Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, the University Libraries, and the Center for Teaching and Learning with a grant from the Leslie Scallet Lieberman and Maury Lieberman Information Literacy Education Fund. The program pairs faculty and librarians to integrate information literacy into existing courses by collaborating on assignments and instruction. The call for applications was sent to faculty in Summer 2019 for the 2019–2020 academic year.

I prepared a proposal with Dr. Younasse Tarbouni, Senior Lecturer in Arabic. We had already established a collegial relationship working together for the departmental film series and

¹ <https://gephardtstitute.wustl.edu/for-faculty-and-staff/illc-2020/>

calligraphy workshops he coordinates. Dr. Tarbouni was returning to teaching first year after a hiatus and wanted to diversify the curricula. He stated a goal for students to be better prepared to research and work with Arabic materials in an academic capacity. We also talked about the limitations of the standard *Al-Kitaab* curricula and opportunities to introduce first-year students to other materials within their comfort level. Our proposal was accepted and we joined the Learning Community for a four-day intensive workshop series at the end of summer break.

Our Learning Community also included faculty-librarian pairs in the fields of anthropology, engineering, environmental studies, and psychology. The workshops were interdisciplinary and interactive sessions about information literacy principles and application, transparent assignments, scaffolding instruction, and assessment. Each pair identified frames from the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education² to design learning outcomes and assignments for our classes. These were then presented and discussed within the cohort.

ACRL Information Literacy Frames

Dr. Tarbouni and I chose to utilize the frames “Information Creation as a Process” and “Searching as Strategic Exploration” for the Beginning Arabic Language and Culture classes. We workshoped the activities and assignments in ILLC using backwards design. These best aligned with our goals to expand students’ understanding of cultural context and prepare them to research in Arabic. We decided to incorporate the assignments in early Spring semester.

For Information Creation as a Process, we collaborated with Special Collections to demonstrate a variety of publications and formats with Arabic text, as well as processes involved in library collections. Our Rare Books Curator, Cassie Brand, gave the class a brief history of Special Collections acquisitions and the context for each item. She also gave insights on the limitations of our collection, which has traditionally prioritized European and North American materials. As Brand’s own education focused on Western materials, she gave them advice on understanding the physical objects. Some items were still uncatalogued, and students were encouraged to find clues related to their origin and purpose. After a tour of the items

² <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>

available, students filled out a primary source worksheet for any item of their choosing.

We planned to work with Brand again for the end of the semester Calligraphy workshop. The Calligraphy workshop is an established event every semester for the department and wider community. I have often featured calligraphy books from the library collection at these workshops. Hosting the workshop at the library and consulting with Brand's expertise was an opportunity to bring the lessons from Special Collections full circle.

Searching as Strategic Exploration was a scaffolded assignment with an initial "search the shelves" activity and a group assignment to create an annotated bibliography for an Arabic text. For the first step, students were required to bring an Arabic text from the library to class. In class, we discussed challenges in using the library for Arabic materials and I demonstrated how to identify and read bibliographic information in the catalog and inside books. In the following class, students gave brief presentations on items they found in the library.

Next, students worked in groups to choose an Arabic text and a secondary source for an annotated bibliography. The bibliography would describe the topic of the Arabic text, the relationship of the secondary source, a reflection on the searching process, and five vocabulary words with definitions from the text (see Appendix for the sample provided to class). Each group was required to send at least one member to meet with me for guided searching and assistance.

These meetings varied in relation to the number of students in attendance, how prepared they were, and their understanding of the assignment. Meeting individually or in a smaller group opened a space for deeper questions and discussion related to the library and their interests in pursuing research. Group presentations were ultimately delivered virtually after the course went online. Our plan to host the Arabic Calligraphy workshop was also interrupted due to COVID-19 precautions, and I only had one opportunity to visit the virtual class before the semester ended.

Evaluation

A test for Information Literacy competencies was designed to be administered at both the beginning and end of each ILLC integrated course. I added questions specific to the activities designed for the

Arabic classes for the post-test. Unfortunately, with the major shift in the semester and concurrent events, only 7 out of 27 students completed the post-test. While this is not a substantial sample size to evaluate the overall impact for Information Literacy, the activity-specific responses are instructive.

Special Collections (Information Creation as a Process)					
Question	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The activity demonstrated a variety of information formats and the processes of understanding materials.	5	1	1	0	0
I have an increased interest in Rare Books and Special Collections because of this activity.	5	1	0	1	0
This activity enhanced my understanding of Arabic language and culture.	5	0	2	0	0
This activity was a valuable addition to my learning experience.	5	2	0	0	0

Annotated Bibliography (Searching as Strategic Exploration)					
Question	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I learned new research skills because of this activity.	1	3	1	2	0
I have an increased interest in the Arabic library collections after this activity.	5	0	1	1	0
This activity enhanced my understanding of Arabic language and culture.	4	2	1	0	0
This activity was a valuable addition to my learning experience.	5	2	0	0	0

Overall, the Special Collections activity was more popular and considered more valuable in the student experience than Searching the Stacks and Annotated Bibliography. A respondent indicated that they struggled to use the stacks due to their beginner level of Arabic, and from our meetings it seemed that the assignment was confusing to many. The greater requirements on student effort and time may also be a factor in the lower enthusiasm for the Bibliography. Only two respondents had met with a Subject Librarian in the past, and six

out of the seven respondents indicated that they would be more likely to meet with a Subject Librarian as a result of this class.

Anecdotally, students expressed enthusiasm for the activities. Students enroll in Beginning Arabic with different goals, such as minimal language requirements, intention for further study, and heritage or religious purposes. The Special Collections session engaged the interests of students across the board, whereas searching the stacks and the bibliography had more appeal for those intending further study.

Conclusion

With such limited data, I cannot make conclusive statements about student impact; however, I hope that my reflections are informative and support colleagues in advancing their own work. This was a valuable experience and opportunity for me to spend time in the classroom and engage with students early in their studies and intending to take more classes in the department. The personal connections built with students and deepened relationship with Dr. Tarbouni were invaluable benefits of the project. I also learned more about the library's collections from the collaboration with Special Collections and seeing the items students pulled from the stacks.

This process has encouraged me to be more experimental in considering entry points to engage with students and promote library resources. Information Literacy assignments are often crafted around existing research objectives, and this course was an opportunity to reframe how IL can fit into coursework. The formal structuring of the Information Literacy Learning Community resulted in specifically planned learning objectives, which were especially useful when coordinating with Special Collections. I plan to repeat that activity again for Beginning Arabic, though I may use digitized manuscript collections as a surrogate until physical spaces re-open. When the library stacks are reopened I plan to try Searching the Stacks and the Annotated Bibliography with intermediate or advanced students, who will have both improved language competency and investment in developing research strategies. I am interested in taking the scaffolding approach further and see what impact direct application activities may have in students' persistent interest in language study. Overall, the experiment was a positive experience for all involved, and I look forward to adapting the lessons further.

Appendix

Sample Annotated Bibliography

Cinema of Naguib Mahfouz
AJ Robinson

Texts

Sayf, Walid. *Sīnimā Najīb Maḥfūz: Al-fann al-jamā'ī wa-al-ibdā' al-mutaḥarriḍ*. Al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-ʿĀmmah lil-Kitāb, 2015.

- The author, Dr. Walid Sayf, is an academic in Egypt. This book is a part of a series on Naguib Mahfouz. It is about the artistic process of films based on Naguib Mahfouz's novels. There are also stills from the film productions.

Almubarakī, Shaikha. "The Cinematic Cairene House in the 'Cairo Trilogy' Films." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 27, no. 2 (2016): 54–70. www.jstor.org/stable/24720020.

- The author, Shaikha Almubarakī, was a Ph.D. candidate at University of California, Berkeley, at the time of publication. The article analyzes the architectural elements in films of Mahfouz's "Cairo Trilogy" related to portrayals of domestic life and modernist/post-colonial friction.

Reflection

I found the Sayf book in the PJ section of the stacks because I wanted to write about literature. The cover has interesting designs and I liked that there were pictures. I found the article by searching for (Naguib Mahfouz cinema) in JSTOR. I think the article's analysis of the social dynamics and space in the films would be helpful for understanding the "collective art and unique creation" described in the book.

Vocabulary

إبداع – creativity

متفرد – unique

عرض – show, display

صدر – release

مخرج – director

Adapting Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Librarianship to Changing Users' Needs

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Summary

Librarianship has been for a very long time a profession needing to adapt to a continually changing environment. Librarians in all settings—public, school, or academic—and fields of expertise have been facing new challenges resulting from both internal and external factors, among which are the emergence and growth of technology, fluctuations in funding, new acquisition models, organizational shifts, the development of Open Access and new scholarly publication models, and an ever-broadening spectrum of users' expectations. As outlined in the most recent document on trends in higher education from the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) Research Planning and Review Committee, "in our current technological and educational environments: change is continual. Still, it affects different libraries at different rates." This paper will attempt to identify the major changes faced based on both authors' own experience.

Keywords

Islamic studies, Middle Eastern studies, Academic librarianship

Introduction

Librarianship has been for a very long time a profession needing to adapt to a continually changing environment. Librarians in all settings and fields of expertise have been facing new challenges resulting from both internal and external factors. Whereas subject librarians had to serve patrons in one unit, like a branch or department within the library, the line between units has faded. The

traditional roles of librarians are declining to be supplanted by functional roles focused on fundraising, marketing, outreach, collection management, etc. Besides, due to the increasing number of academic programs and the decreasing number of librarians, “the day of the subject specialist is possibly on its way out” (Keith 2015) to the benefit of a functional-based structure where several key players with different backgrounds are involved.

Meanwhile, the emergence and growth of technology, fluctuations in funding, new acquisition models, the emergence of Open Access and new scholarly publication models, the multiplicity of academic needs and interest groups, the appearance of interdisciplinarity, the mutations in search behavior, the variety of research materials, and numerous other factors have led to an increasingly broadening and complex spectrum of users’ expectations. As outlined in the most recent document on trends in higher education from the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Research Planning and Review Committee (ACRL 2018), “in our current technological and educational environments: change is continual, but it affects different libraries at different rates.” Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarianship with its strong tradition of user-centered support due to the necessary emphasis on the discipline and geographical area is appropriately affected.

This paper will attempt to identify some challenges affecting more specifically Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarianship, based on the authors’ personal experience. After defining Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarianship, the authors will investigate seven areas, identified as having been particularly subject to change.

Literature Review

A glance at the scholarly literature shows that librarians’ need to respond to constant and rapid change is heavily documented, discussed, and debated (Gilman 2017). Thousands of monographs, journal articles, and professional associations’ reports published in the past 25 years discuss new trends in higher education and how they affect the future of academic librarianship. Such productivity indicates that the commitment to continually assess performance, adjust to change, and demonstrate the value of the profession and the professionals has been a part of practicing librarianship—and academic librarianship—for decades. In most cases, publications

focus upon one specific role of the academic librarian such as reference and instruction, collection development and management, or research support, upon one factor affecting the daily practice such as the emergence of a particular technology, or upon a specific branch of librarianship such as health or law librarianship. Regardless of the primary focus of the publication, the general feeling expressed is that “activities in ... libraries have become so complex and specialized ... that it would be impossible for any one person to become an expert in all aspects of the field of academic librarianship” (ibid.). Area studies librarianship in general, and Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarianship in particular, however, have received much less attention. Lesley Pitman’s recent publication about “new challenges facing area studies librarianship in the United Kingdom” (Pitman 2015) provides an interesting framework to look at Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarianship.

Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Librarianship

By definition, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies are part of the broader academic field of “area studies” which is “best understood as a cover term for a family of academic fields and activities joined by a common commitment to: (1) intensive language study; (2) in-depth field research in the local languages; (3) close attention to local histories, viewpoints, materials and interpretations; (4) testing, elaborating, critiquing, or developing grounded theory against detailed observation; and (5) multi-disciplinary conversations often crossing the boundaries of the social sciences and humanities” (Szanton 2004). Despite sharp criticism of area studies based on the lack of theory and intellectual rigor (Pitman 2015), area studies are nevertheless recognized today as a legitimate inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural field of research. Among them, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies first emerged in Europe (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) in the 17th century, stemming “primarily from Europe’s colonial expansion into the Indian and African continents” (Salamon 2015). Later, it spread in North America where, after World War I, most universities offered area studies programs.

Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarianship “developed alongside the field of orientalism, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies” (ibid.) and is today considered a distinct and specialized field of academic librarianship. Major characteristics of IMES

librarianship include dual expertise with the holding of a master's degree in information science and a degree (B.A., master's, or Ph.D.) in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies and/or any related fields such as political science, anthropology, archeology, history, sociology, philosophy, etc., as well as the need to master at least one language used in areas where Islam plays a significant role (i.e., Arabic, Aramaic, Armenian, Hebrew, Indonesian, Kurdish, Turkish, Persian, Urdu). Often, due to budget restrictions, institutions expect a single librarian to cover a broad and diverse geographic area requiring the knowledge of more than one language as well as an extensive geographic, historical, and cultural knowledge. Once acquired, the "regional-based" competencies have to be maintained and further developed throughout one's career to perform teaching, reference, and collection development through regular field-trips and language training, or both. In sum, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarians are a highly qualified, multilingual, and field-committed community (ibid.).

On a more practical level, IMES librarianship distinguishes itself by a strong dedication in building and developing substantial research collections to provide the highest quality support to the academic community. IMES librarians are committed to making these very specialized collections available, offering reliable catalogs as well as an increasing number of digital materials most easily and quickly providing reference and teaching. Likewise, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarians are heavily involved in teaching and research activities, not only supporting student and faculty research but also actively contributing to scholarship (writing articles, presenting at conferences, etc.). Besides, outreach activities like organizing events (film screenings, book discussions, etc.), curating exhibitions, or participating in workshops to make both the field and the collections better known and understood is often a part of the daily work. Lastly, political developments in Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the past 20 years have turned the preservation of the written heritage originating from these areas into a prominent preoccupation of librarians in the field, resulting in a growing involvement in initiatives pursuing this goal.

Collections Development and Assessment

Libraries in the UK have started talking about Content Strategy instead of Collection Development and Collection Management

(Hunt 2017). The change is conceptual and not only terminological, as libraries are now facilitators, enabling access of content, including commercial ones provided by a third party, instead of being curators of their owned collection only. Since the emergence of the digital era, the concept of collections at libraries had to be redefined, from digitized collections, and digital-born ones, to research data collections, eBook packages, and databases. The users' changing needs, in-text search, remote access, etc., played a significant role, accelerating the shift from print to digital. Content development has moved beyond the library boundaries and shifted from the centralized specialist in the library to patron-driven or evidence-based acquisitions.

Moreover, collection assessment considers numerous components to define users' changing needs and to fill in collection gaps, including Inter-Library Loan and Document Delivery Data, database usage and article downloads, etc. However, due to the exponential growth of information resources, price increases, and budget cuts, academic libraries had to find ways to quantify the importance of each publication, justify annual budgets with evidence, and build core collections. The usage of metrics was integrated into collection development and assessment to assess, quantitatively, the strength and weakness of subject classes through library circulation data, where "the h-index defines the threshold upon which the collection improvement stands" (Atallah 2016). The most recent usage of metrics in the academic library has expanded from assessing the Return on Investment to determine the Value on Investment, trying to find out the way academic libraries influence research activities and learning behavior, which require a correlation between the library collection and research productivity. Elsevier has recently promoted this service via an email sent to academic libraries linking to a white paper entitled "Empower Collection Development Initiatives with Value on Investment (VOI): Moving Beyond ROI to Create Impact Assessment Strategies."

Besides, the management of web-scale discovery search engines, including the open-access context, involves dealing with various aggregators in cooperation with faculty members and liaisons. Collaboration might also be requested to determine relevant Series Standing Orders to be placed, approval plans, appropriate e-book packages, and databases in a determined field.

In parallel, Patron Driven Acquisitions (PDA) models for prints and electronics can also be challenging. By supplying MARC records through their platform, vendors and aggregators increase the exposure of users to material, allow more visibility to collections, and help reduce the acquisitions' cost. However, the management of the different record batches can be challenging: avoiding duplicates, budget adaptation, managing different record batches.

While struggling with these general issues, IMES librarians also face challenges closely tied to the area in which they practice. As an interdisciplinary field, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies researchers need both disciplinary-rooted and geographically-based resources that are both difficult to acquire, and expensive to maintain. Given limited and decreasing budgets, this only seems possible by collaborating with disciplinary librarians for generic resources and focusing on specialized—area-based—resources. Similarly, the implementation of collaborative collection development where different institutions focus on a specific area of the field can ensure the development of more relevant and comprehensive research collections. While IMES librarians are often expected to master all of the languages spoken or written in a geographical area—which is if not impossible, extremely difficult—sharing linguistic skills across departments or institutions can also contribute to the building of higher-quality collections.

Moreover, collecting from the Islamic world and the Middle East necessitates a good understanding of the publishing landscape in the area, which helps with identifying relevant content, evaluating availability and accessibility, and refining approval or acquisition plans negotiated with specialist vendors. This process can hardly be achieved from a distance and requires regular field trips allowing for the establishment of a network of publishers and suppliers. Acquisition trips also permit the collection of primary source materials providing original background and contextual information that is not widely available and is nevertheless invaluable for research. Budget management is another challenging task, as it is affected by shipping costs, fluctuant exchange rates, and irregularity in invoicing, all of which do not work well in a centralized environment where acquisition processes in all fields and disciplines are assumed to be the same. Last, collection development in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies often remains print-dominated in an era when institutions favor electronic resources, resulting in tensions

between the institutional policies and daily practice. Moreover, the rare digital resources available are very costly and generally dominated by Western publishers digitizing unique collections, periodicals, and official archives.

In 2012, an information sciences professor stated that “Good libraries that build collections based upon patron-driven acquisitions will be able to provide researchers with what they want. Great libraries will be able to provide researchers with useful resources that they didn’t know they needed” (Holley 2012). If the selection and acquisition of materials remain fundamental in the life of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarians, they also have an essential role to play in helping users identify, locate, and access materials kept in libraries and archives around the world.

Supporting Digital Humanities

As a changing approach to research, digital humanities (DH) is one of the current trends that affect academic libraries and represent a new challenge for librarians. Those are, most of the time, based on digitized collections. The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) recently released a set of guidelines for “Evaluating Digital Scholarship for Hiring, Tenure and Promotion.” The document highlights that digital projects often need to be developed from scratch by scholars, as Islamic and Middle Eastern studies is a relatively small field and spread quite thin in terms of geographical areas, periods, methodologies, and sources. The document also emphasizes the conversion into digital formats of resources related to the Muslim world and the Middle East. It shows that numerous resources remain uncatalogued, unlisted, and undescribed, thus, inaccessible to scholars. For discoverability, inventories with sufficient metadata should be created by experts “trained as scholars processing the requisite language fluently and critical evaluation skill” (MESA 2018). Besides, project management after digitization is now based on collaboration and teamwork, as different types of knowledge and skills are required. Digital humanities’ application areas include topic modeling, cultural analytics, visualization, network analysis, animated archives, gaming, etc. Various combinations can be requested depending on the nature of the project: from text analysis, historical timelines, and computer skills to Geographical Information Systems and online exhibits. Updating skills is another pitfall, especially with a rapidly changing

technology. This collaboration requires reliance on all team members, which could, however, be a double-edged sword because a lack of cooperation might jeopardize the outcome of a project.

In contrast, a committed team might achieve spectacular results given the variety of backgrounds. This collaboration also leverages the role of librarians as co-authors (Corlett-Rivera 2017) and co-teachers. Given the nature of their work, Middle Eastern and Islamic studies librarians are used to being flexible and working collaboratively. However, the stakeholders that might be involved in such projects, including university leadership and administration, IT services, the research office, web developers, programmers, scholars, and faculty members (Cox 2016), are generally self-reliant when it comes to research. This collaboration might also present a challenge by itself, as humanists typically share the research results and not the process (Pitti 2007). Exceptions exist, as does the challenge for IMES librarians to find collaborative co-players proactively. Broadcasting the library's capacity to deliver digital scholarship projects and securing the infrastructure and funds should also be managed. Librarians are confronted with limited understanding on the part of faculty and students of digital humanities, as a relatively emerging field. One big challenge in this area is related to the nature of non-Latin characters and the difficulty of accurate conversion to digital with existing Optical Character Recognition (OCR) systems, especially when it comes to old printed texts or manuscripts. However, if we consider the complexity of Middle Eastern characters, the number of recent projects "tends to be praise that foregrounds the number of pages newly digitized" (Riedel 2016).

Engaging in Scholarly Communications

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) defines scholarly communications as "the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use. The system includes both formal means of communication, such as publication in peer-reviewed journals, and informal channels, such as electronic listservs" (American Library Association 2006). As such, scholarly communications are an area in which academic librarians have several roles to play. Not only do they actively participate in producing scholarly writings and research, but also, they ensure the proper dissemination, access, and preservation of

other researchers' production as part of their responsibilities. Moreover, academic libraries' "fundamental role in removing barriers to the free exchange of information is transforming the landscape of scholarly communications through building institutional repositories, publishing Open Access journals, hosting Open Educational Resources, facilitating access to research data and advocating for the passage of OA policies" (Chadwell and Sutton 2014).

Over the past five years, Open Access publishing and deposit in disciplinary or institutional repositories have found themselves enforced by funding agencies requirements where OA has become compulsory for outputs of the research they fund. However, the institutions that allocate public funds and publishing giants are co-operating to assign those to their commercial advantage. The former makes "Open Access compulsory for scholarly publications and the latter stand ready to publish the research findings on OA for a hefty fee" (Hagner 2018).

Users' need to access institutional repositories requires librarians to be familiarized with content management, mainly when using open-access software such as Fedora or D-Space. Librarians' involvement in data management and the ability to advise on projects across the entire research data lifecycle, including access, collection development, data management, sharing, archiving, and visualization, are to be integrated into the librarians' new skills. Besides, nowadays, libraries are not limited anymore to the purchase of information but are producing and gathering content (Rogers 2007). Thus expertise in content production through De Gruyter, Springer Online, etc., is a new requirement. Other prerequisites are data preservation (in particular research data) and sharing; those are mainly related to grant-funded projects when as part of the proposal package, grantees are requested to submit a data management plan. The National Science Foundation (NSF) requirements are that "Investigators are expected to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the primary data, samples" (National Science Foundation 2018). The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) requires details about the plan to manage the data and its mechanism: "how data will be managed and maintained until shared with others" (National Endowment for the Humanities 2018). The above shows the divergent views between academic institutions and investors. The former rely on data

management to allow verification of the published research result, reducing redundancy, and research fraud, etc. Investors seek a return on investment, with data discoverability, accessibility, and reusability.

While “it would be impossible for any one person to become an expert in all aspects of the field of academic librarianship” (Gilman 2017), new opportunities have emerged mainly in the scholarly communications area. With the explosion of digital publishing, they get to be the keepers of an appropriate balance between print and electronic, especially given the “differing take up and reach of digital publishing across the world” (Hazen 2013). Moreover, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarians can support scholarly communications by advising on content management, mainly when using open-access software such as Fedora or D-Space. They can advise on collection development, data management, sharing, archiving, and visualization, mostly related to grant-funded projects when as part of the proposal package, grantees are requested to submit a data management plan, or on digital preservation and archiving.

Partnering with Researchers

The metaphor of research as a conversation “is not new in academia, [but] it persists because it is a succinct and accurate description of the ideal of building knowledge” (Hoffman 2016). This idea touches on several aspects of library research support services such as “providing access to previous research, educating users on how to discover it and give credit to it, and helping students learn how to analyze, synthesize and respond to it” (ibid.).

Besides supporting research activities, librarians often collaborate on and contribute to research projects as they conduct systematic reviews, partner on grant applications, present at disciplinary conferences, help in quantitative and qualitative data management, or advise on copyright compliance. If librarians participating in systematic reviews generally appear as achievers of co-authorship (Ross-White 2016), librarians partnering on grant applications or presenting at disciplinary conferences are recognized as researchers. New types of engagement redefine academic librarians as active research partners, researchers, and functional experts across the university.

However, the evolution of research methods, the emergence of new information-seeking habits, the shift towards interdisciplinarity and team-based projects, the dependency on increasingly complex and varied information, and data (Hoffman 2016) have profoundly transformed the research process. Providing adequate research support in this context requires understanding not only the research process in general but also the specific demands of the community served. Additional obstacles to the provision of relevant research support include librarians' expectations and assumptions about library practices, researchers' reluctance to recognize they need help, and ignorance or misunderstanding of what the library has to offer. One of the methods widely used to understand how researchers work is usability testing that allows the monitoring and analysis of logging accesses and follow the pathways taken by users in the system, to observe them as they accomplish tasks in the library, or to survey them about their library practice.

Area studies researchers face a complex and fast-changing information landscape and "without library services, systems and functions specially designed to address their needs, they will struggle" (Pitman 2015). As a highly educated professional community, often having extensive research experience of their own, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarians are probably more equipped than some of their colleagues to understand and identify research needs and provide adequate research support. Research partnerships include a wide range of activities: from the provision of high-quality source materials, study spaces, and assistance with literature reviews and grant proposals to advice on resources evaluation, copyright, or data management, and later in the process, on publishing and disciplinary repositories (*ibid.*).

Collaborating with Instructors

Traditional discovery and instructional services may have evolved into exploration, learning, and collaboration, but information skills training remains essential. Significant changes in pedagogy, student demographics, learning environments, and teaching spaces "have created a climate in which librarians can partner with faculty to create content to support students' development of information literacy skills (Reyes 2006). Medical reference librarians are used to going "beyond a narrow focus" teaching courses like bioinformatics or telemedicine (King and Lapidus 2015). Similarly, Islamic and

Middle East studies librarians were always involved in offering teaching for necessary information skills, but also for core competencies in the field, including a deep understanding of the sources, where the regional and linguistic background skills are indispensable.

Traditionally, IMES librarians have embedded regional and linguistic knowledge into the teaching of generic information skills. Still, the increased international collaboration on resources, the proliferation of databases and digital collections, and the general complexification of the information landscape provide a unique opportunity to make their training more relevant than ever. A standard Islamic and Middle Eastern studies information training focuses upon locating appropriate resources published not only in the West but also in the Muslim world and the Middle East. It also involves identifying limitations of Western sources, overcoming issues related to the treatment of non-European languages in library catalogs, databases, and other online resources, understanding copyright laws, and raising awareness about the limited amount of resources available in the West.

Moreover, teaching methods and supports can be adapted to reach the most significant impact. In the early 1980s, Auchterlonie noticed that his bibliographic instruction proved more efficient when provided on video than in-person (Auchterlonie 1983). If online education has nowadays become very common in libraries, traditional in-person instruction nevertheless remains popular. A broad spectrum of practices ranging from embedding library instruction in the curriculum to offering semi-credited or full-credit courses in information techniques is documented in the literature. Two elements that make a difference in terms of attendance and attention paid during library instruction sessions are the attitude of the professors and the timeliness of the period. Indeed, when faculty legitimate librarians' expertise, students benefit more from the library instruction. Providing support at the point of need is also critical in making librarians' teaching more relevant and impactful.

Innovative models include collaborative teaching when a librarian and a professor are both involved in the preparation and delivery of the information literacy session, or consulting to faculty when a librarian becomes the expert who encourages and supports them incorporating information literacy skills into their class curricula (Reyes 2006). When implemented, such models can lead to

“new and productive partnerships between researchers and librarians, benefiting both parties and providing quantifiable proof to the institution of the value of the library and its specialists’ librarians” (Pitman 2015).

Preserving Threatened Heritage

In their efforts to expand Islamic and Middle Eastern studies collections, libraries have confronted the availability of endangered heritage, sometimes forsaken. While we generally think of libraries as secure repositories, the period of war or turmoil in the Muslim world over the past 25 years has demonstrated that there is a need for safeguarding the cultural heritage. Numerous collaborative projects initiated both in the West and in the Muslim world—generally supported by Western funding—have emerged, aiming at ensuring the long-term preservation of fragile and damaged materials; the location, cataloging, and accessibility of hidden materials; or the rescue of materials threatened by destruction or disappearance as a result of social and political instability.

While libraries act as secure repositories for manuscripts and rare materials, some are more actively involved in preservation and digitization efforts than others. In specific libraries, it is even possible to watch how manuscript paper “is fortified to last longer and how researchers capture images of the manuscripts, creating a digital archive. The difference between those libraries involved in such activities and others that are not is mainly their access to training and resources.” One of the first initiatives aiming at preserving the largely unknown handwritten tradition of sub-Saharan Africa is the Tombouctou Manuscripts Project established in 2003 by the University of Cape Town (South Africa) in collaboration with local private and public libraries. “Colonial historiography has always held that Africa had few written languages, and as such, the only reliable sources of knowledge on the pre-colonial period were archaeology and oral history. However, even these sources were rather tenuous, since archaeological findings date back to hundreds of thousands of years and oral history may only be able to stretch back about a hundred years” (Tombouctou Manuscripts Project 2003). The Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) project, of St John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota, “ensures that manuscripts threatened by war, disasters, looting, and neglect are preserved and accessible for future generations.” Given the

instability of the Middle East, efforts have been deployed to safeguard the local heritage. Various Middle Eastern initiatives, in Lebanon and elsewhere, include academic libraries seeking for, and housing, private collections (Atallah 2017). Even if the processing of such resources seems time consuming, treasures are often hidden in these forgotten collections, especially out of print, early Arabic printed books, which cannot be found on the market. More recently, the Digital Library of the Middle East (DLME) suggests federating Middle Eastern collections from around the world, “in response to the tragic displacement of people and losses of life in conflict zones, and to ongoing threats to the cultural heritage of the Middle East through destruction, looting, and illegal trade.” When not leading them, libraries and their professionals are always heavily involved in such initiatives. The Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) recently established an Endangered Libraries and Archives Committee to raise awareness, provide education, and advocate for shared standards and disaster awareness for libraries and archives in the Middle East “through collaborative arrangements with librarians, scholarly groups, and libraries in the Middle East to encourage training, the building of the region-wide library and expert networks, the designing of prevention plans, and the formation of immediate response projects.” Librarians can easily preserve the print format of the material, and when copyright allows, create a digital copy to be maintained in turn, then promote these collections among researchers and contribute to creating research projects or include these materials into the curriculum. However, this process requires a set of new skills in digital humanities.

A major challenge highlighted by the United Nations that reflects the importance of preservation is the political systematic cultural cleansing, similar to the Syrian and Iraqi situations in 2016. Other problems include the underestimation of the value of owned materials or resistance to share endangered properties owned privately. The latter applies to private donors and institutions which hold cultural collections. As holders of cultural heritage, each community (mainly sectarian) refrains from sharing its cultural resources with other institutions, which leads the researchers to scattered information, while cultural diversity should be an asset. Each institution has to be approached independently for information retrieval. Besides, loss of data might sometimes occur, as not every institution follows the international rules of digital preservation.

Work is, however, moving slowly in the right direction. From the identification, location, and acquisition of materials to the assessment, conservation, digital preservation, and further to the promotion of digital collections, each step of the process requires the collaboration of numerous stakeholders potentially based in different institutions (located in different countries), and the pooling of resources, skills, and competencies. Here again, teamwork and collaboration is key to success.

Conclusion

Academic and research libraries exist in an evolved and evolving environment, and are moving from offering a fixed set of services to a “constant beta mode of service evolution” (Proffitt, Michalko, and Renspie 2015). Librarians have to adapt to ever-changing users’ needs and to shape future services based on these new expectations. In the past 25 years, the key to survival has been keeping abreast of the changes, working towards redefining roles and expanding areas of expertise to remain relevant. Exploring seven domains of librarianship particularly affected by change allowed us to identify some challenges affecting more specifically Islamic and Middle Eastern studies librarians and to investigate ways in which new needs could be addressed. When considered separately, integrating new tasks and developing new skills might seem easy and manageable. However, the constant need to grow professionally and the time this requires become challenging.

The coronavirus outbreak that has been affecting the world since the beginning of 2020 altered users’ behavior and forced all libraries and librarians to face a new reality. When libraries closed their doors, accessing physical collections became impossible and electronic publications became the only available option to access resources.¹ Digitization, mainly intended for preservation purposes prior to COVID-19, became the primary way to access both main library resources and distinctive collections. Librarians had to create or develop further virtual alternatives to many services like reference, research help, library instruction, etc., and users had to

¹ Islamic and Middle East studies librarians face specific challenges summarized in a public statement of the Middle East Librarians Association released on June 22nd, 2020: <https://www.mela.us/2020/06/22/mela-statement-on-collection-development-access-and-equity-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>

adapt to an all-virtual environment. The necessary physical distancing will affect library spaces usage and day-to-day operations, and perhaps even transform them profoundly and durably. If it remains difficult at this point to assess the extent of the economic consequences of the pandemic, drastic budget cuts can be expected, and once again librarians will have to do more with less (Cox 2020).

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International and Area Studies (IAS) Faculty: Are They Different?

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Introduction

This study sheds light on various unique or special characteristics of the faculty in international and area studies (IAS) departments as they were recognized by analyzing the findings of the Ithaka faculty survey at the University of California at Berkeley.

At the end of 2018, the UC Berkeley Library conducted the Ithaka survey, which was sent “to 2,748 faculty members across all disciplines, including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, and instructors in the University. In all, 811 faculty, 30% of the total, completed the survey.”¹ Among these faculty respondents, close to 15% (106 faculty) from various international and area studies (IAS) departments completed the survey.

The entire survey data were analyzed based on various demographics such as departments, divisions, age, job title, number of years in the field, and role. So in order to better understand if faculty in international and area studies (IAS) have special or different characteristics than the faculty campus-wide, this study analyzed the data subset for specific questions for IAS faculty respondents (106 faculty). These respondents are from ten area studies departments in the university, including: African American Studies, French, German, Italian Studies, East Asian Languages & Cultures, Near Eastern Studies, Scandinavian Languages, Slavic Languages & Literature, South & Southeast Asian Studies, and finally, Spanish & Portuguese Studies.

In its new version, the Ithaka survey consists of 35 required questions, and for UC Berkeley, the material type module was also added to make a total of 41 required questions in the survey.

¹ Chan Li, et al., “UC Berkeley Library Faculty Survey 2018 Report,” *EScholarship*, University of California (23 Sept 2019) escholarship.org/uc/item/9p90t88d.

Selectively, this study focused only on the questions for which IAS faculty showed differences from the wider faculty at the university. This selective approach limited the number of analyzed questions to 14 questions² in five areas including discovery and access, research practices and format preferences, research dissemination and publication, the role of the library, and teaching and learning.

Study Limits

The data collected from the Ithaka survey for this study focused only on the departments that are tied to the international and area studies in the university. This means that faculty with a focus on global studies or specific geographical areas in the world in other departments were not included.

In addition, IAS respondents, being 15% of the total Ithaka survey respondents, are a small percentage, but the data could nevertheless be used to highlight the major trends for IAS faculty in the university.

The survey was conducted at the end of 2018, which meant that it did not reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the views of IAS respondents. So similar studies in the future will be useful to compare IAS faculty research and teaching characteristics before COVID and after.

Literature Review

There are a number of publications on the topic of area studies in general, and its similarities with other areas or disciplines such as special collections or arts and humanities. There are also studies on specific aspects of area studies such as collaboration, collection development, or the usage of foreign language materials through citation analysis or interlibrary-loan data analysis and more. To some extent, these are related studies as they highlight specific features or characteristics of area studies, but the closest to the current study is the recent research report published in September 2020 by Ithaka S+R.³

² See Appendix for the list of Ithaka survey questions selected for focus in this study.

³ Danielle Cooper, "Supporting Research in Languages and Literature," *Ithaka S+R* (22 Sept. 2020) ithaka.org/publications/supporting-research-in-languages-and-literature/

In its recent research, Ithaka S+R, in collaboration with the Modern Language Association (MLA) and fourteen US academic institutions, examined the research methods and practices of language and literature scholars in the United States. The report explores scholars' activities throughout the research lifecycle starting from identifying the research topic to publishing.

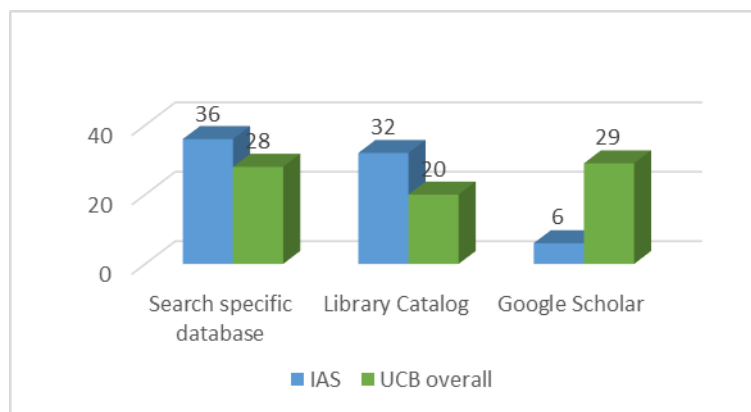
Out of 192 phone interviews conducted with scholars from the participating institutions, 40 interview transcripts were selected and analyzed as a representative sample. About three quarters (76%) of the sample were area studies scholars, while 19% were culture studies scholars and 5% were writing studies scholars.

Because the majority of the representative sample in the report were area studies scholars, the characteristics that are highlighted through the report are largely reflective of area studies scholars, which is similar to the current study where the focus is on the international and area studies (IAS) faculty responses to the Ithaka faculty survey at Berkeley. Related findings from the report will be highlighted throughout the current study as they occur.

Survey Findings and Discussion

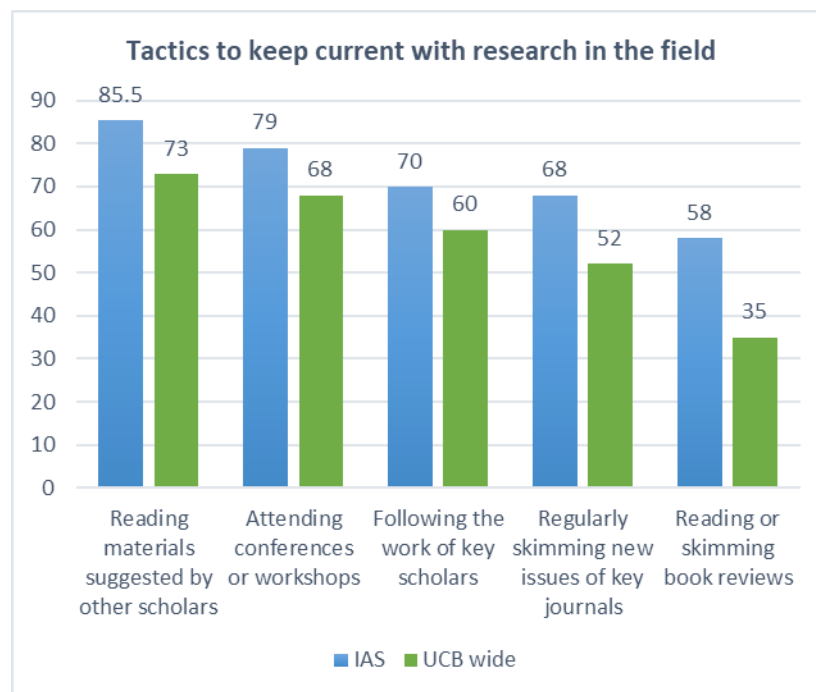
A. Discovery and Access

Q. 1. To find new journal articles and monographs, the top choice for IAS faculty was searching a specific database. The library catalog was the second choice, while Google Scholar came as low as 6% for IAS, though it was the top selection with 29% of the respondents university-wide.



It was not clear what “database” means in this question, but respondents may have (or likely) associated the term “database” with libraries or library resources. This means that the top two selections for IAS faculty are library discovery tools. This shows that IAS faculty rely heavily on the library as the top choice to find new literature in their respective areas of interest.

Q. 2. Similar to the faculty university-wide, IAS faculty ranked tactics they use to keep current with research in the field, with the top choice being reading materials suggested by other scholars, followed by attending conferences, then following works by key scholars; however, close to 60% of IAS faculty value book reviews versus 35% of the respondents university-wide.



It is clear that IAS faculty value all the listed tactics more highly than other faculty in the university. I argue that this may indicate that finding information about research in IAS fields requires more effort, and thus IAS faculty do all they can to keep current with research in

their field. This may include obtaining information about literature published in other countries, and maybe in other languages. According to a study of the use of foreign language materials by faculty in social sciences at Berkeley, “faculty with research interests outside the US require heavy use of foreign language materials, with 80% saying they needed these materials over 20 times in the past five years.”⁴

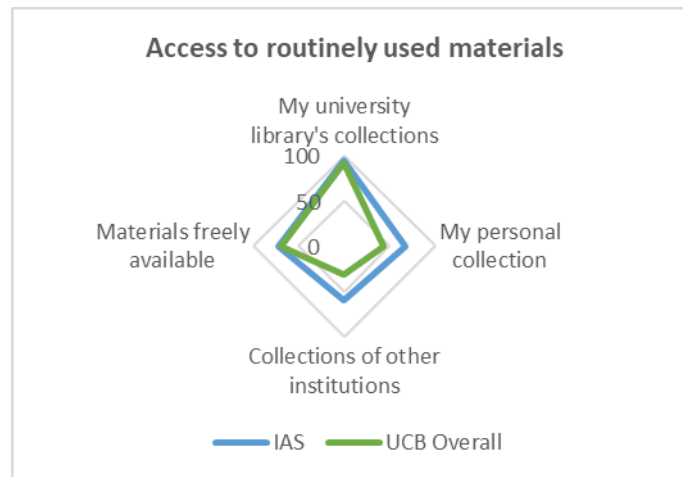
Q. 5. When asked about the practice of accessing their routinely used journal articles and scholarly monographs, IAS faculty respondents agreed with faculty university-wide that the library collections, followed by freely available materials, are the top choices. However, almost 70% of the IAS faculty respondents valued their personal collections versus about 45% of the respondents university-wide.

According to the recent report published by Ithaka S+R-MLA, MLA scholars, regardless of career stage, place a high value on owning print copies of books. The report lists a number of reasons for this practice, which include⁵:

- Affection for the physical object: one of the interviewed scholars in the Ithaka-MLA study said that “If there’s only one thing I love to own, it’s a book.”
- Ability to annotate owned print books extensively by hand, which may not be possible either with digital copies or with library borrowed copies. Another scholar stated, “I would rank owning the book first, digital access second, and then physical library copy third.”
- Making the best use of the “opportunity to find hard-to-come-by texts published outside the United States.” This relates to IAS scholars, where some of the resources they use are not easy to obtain because they are published outside of the US, or in languages other than English.

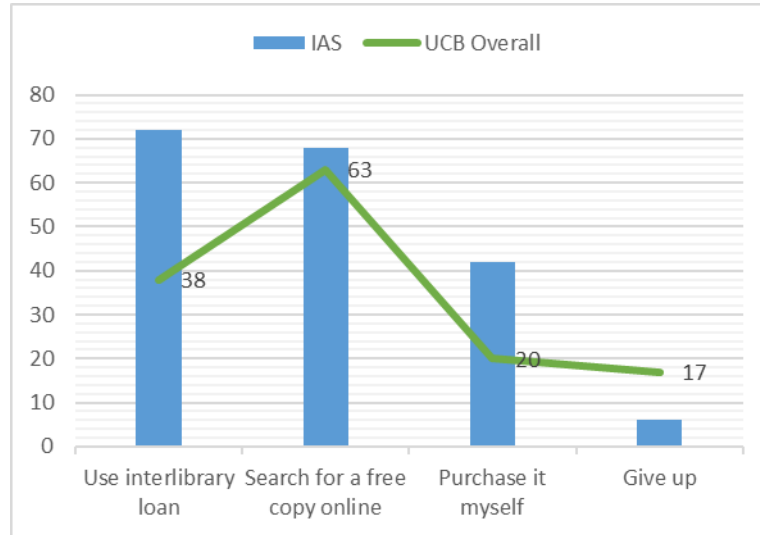
⁴ Susan Edwards, “Collecting Globally, Connecting Locally,” *Library Assessment Conference Proceedings* (Sept. 2019) www.libraryassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/76-Edwards-et-al-ConnectingGlobally.pdf.

⁵ Cooper, loc. cit.



In addition, about 60% of IAS respondents value the collections of other institutions versus a little over 30% of the faculty university-wide. IAS scholars value the collections of other institutions, as some of these collections are available to them through interlibrary loan, research visits in person, or through digital access. In my opinion, libraries cannot get all the resources needed for research for IAS scholars, especially the materials published outside of the US in foreign languages. Libraries do not all have the same funding, and some libraries do not have qualified staff with area studies knowledge and the language skills needed to acquire non-US/non-English resources.

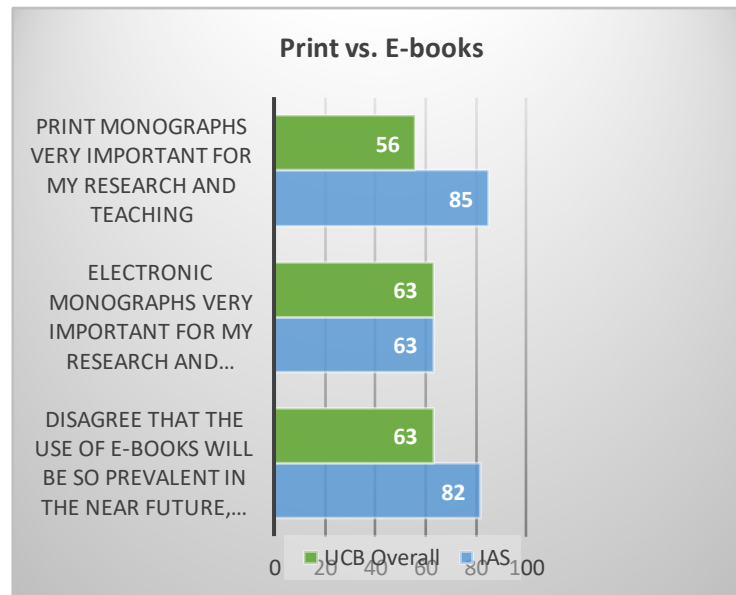
Q. 6. When IAS faculty do not have immediate access to a journal article or a monograph, close to three quarters of IAS faculty use inter-library loan versus 38% university-wide. Again, this confirms the importance of interlibrary loan to IAS faculty as many of them think first about ILL versus other venues to access the needed article or monograph. Once more, to confirm the importance of building owned collections, 42% of IAS faculty respondents purchase materials themselves versus 20% university-wide.



In addition, both IAS and faculty university-wide value access to free online resources. It is not the top choice though for IAS, as most of the IAS-related resources are in print, especially the recently-published materials that are published outside of the US and are in foreign languages. It is also noticeable that a smaller percentage of IAS faculty give up compared to other faculty in the university. As mentioned earlier, discovering resources related to IAS often requires great effort to find and obtain. Thus IAS faculty seek the resources they need through all possible venues, including personal networks. According to the Ithaka-MLA report, “[m]any scholars prioritize building working relationships with archivists, who can often suggest materials of interest that would not be apparent from searching catalogs or finding aids.”⁶

⁶ Ibid.

B. Research Practices and Format Preferences



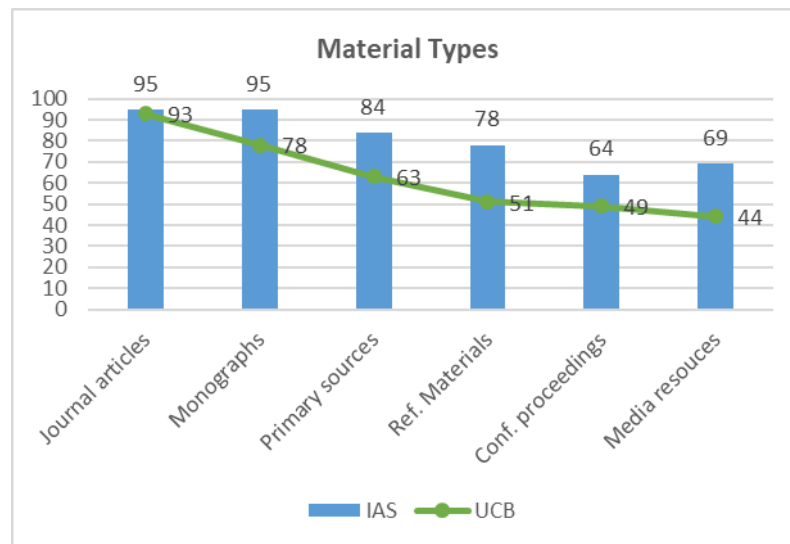
Q. 3. Most IAS faculty respondents indicated that print monographs play a very important role in their research and teaching, while close to 65% of them also highly valued electronic books.

Nevertheless, most IAS respondents disagreed with the statement that print books will not be necessary in libraries in the near future. As stated in the introduction, this survey was conducted well before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the UC Berkeley library and, as at many other libraries, blocked access to print materials, leading to an increased reliance on electronic resources. One could claim that the impact of the pandemic may change IAS faculty preferences in the future. This may happen as ebooks became the safest option during the pandemic, but even with digital access arrangements such as [HathiTrust-Emergency Temporary Access Service \(ETAS\)](#), a specific library user cannot access a digital copy of a specific book through HT-ETAS unless the user's affiliated library holds a print copy of it.

Q. 4. In this question, faculty ranked the cases in which they prefer to use print books or ebooks. Print is the preferred format for most IAS faculty, as they use it for reading cover to cover in depth, reading sections in depth, comparing treatment of ideas between monographs, or skimming in whole or in part. It is worth mentioning that it is not only IAS faculty who find that reading in depth is easier in print; 83% of the faculty respondents university-wide do as well. On the other hand, IAS faculty were in favor of ebooks in searching for a particular topic or exploring references as books in electronic format are easier for this purpose.

C. Material Types

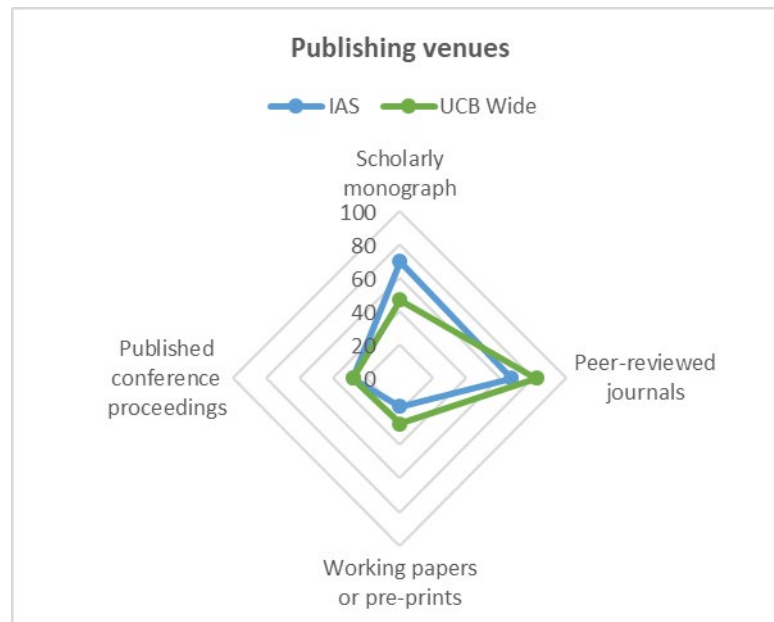
MT. 1 & 2. When asked about the importance of different types of scholarly materials, peer-reviewed journals and scholarly monographs are still the top choices for both IAS faculty and the faculty university-wide. Similarly, primary sources are the third important material type for both groups, but this type is more valued by IAS faculty respondents, with 84% versus 63%.



Once more, IAS faculty respondents valued all material types more highly than other faculty university-wide. Also, IAS faculty highly value the importance of peer-reviewed journals and journal articles.

However, as the IAS faculty have topical and regional focuses, they utilize all possible resources they can access to support their research and teaching. This includes materials such as reference works, films, media, and conference proceedings.

D. Research Dissemination and Publication

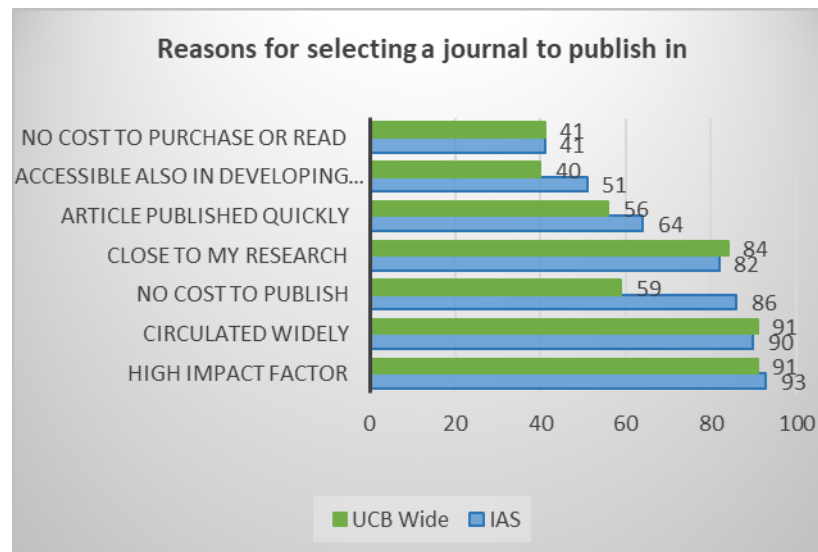


Q. 9. Similar to faculty university-wide respondents, monographs and journal articles are the top venues of publication for IAS faculty; however, 70% of IAS faculty preferred publishing monographs versus 47% UC Berkeley-wide; while 82% of faculty university-wide preferred publishing journal articles versus 67% of IAS respondents. According to the MLA-Ithaka survey, the “language and literature scholars shape their research around anticipated outputs. This means that tenure and promotion incentives—which continue to favor a narrow range of traditional, peer-reviewed outputs—strongly influence what types of research scholars prioritize, and at what career stage they do so.”⁷ About three quarters

⁷ Ibid.

of the faculty interviewed in the MLA-Ithaka survey were area studies faculty and the survey findings matched the IAS faculty responses in the Berkeley faculty survey.

Q. 10. When asked about the reasons for selecting specific journals to publish in, journals with high impact factor, then journals circulated widely, followed by no cost for publishing were the top factors for IAS faculty. Looking at the 10 departments analyzed in this study, most of them are included in the Arts and Humanities under the College of Letters & Science at Berkeley, where faculty are expected to publish scholarly monographs or to publish in reputable journals.



No cost to publish came as an important factor for more respondents in IAS versus UC Berkeley-wide. According to the faculty answers to question 18 in the survey, only 20% of IAS faculty respondents versus 53% university wide received research funding in the last five years. This may be one of the reasons behind IAS faculty care for no cost to publish.

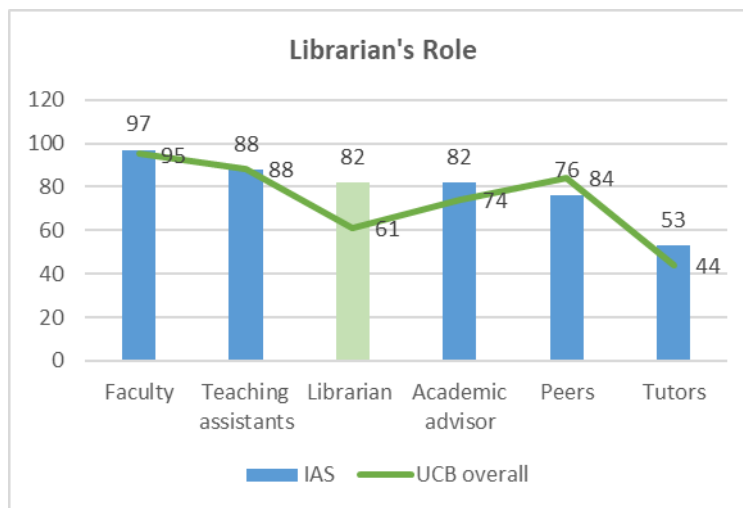
UC Berkeley and IAS faculty respondents agreed that time is an important factor for selecting a specific journal to publish in. They

also agree that no cost to read is another factor for more than 40% of the faculty respondents in both IAS and UC Berkeley wide.

More than half of the IAS faculty respondents place value on their published articles reaching readers in developing as well as developed countries. It is not surprising that they feel their research output about a specific area of the world should be accessible to researchers in that area.

E. Role of the Library

Q. 25. IAS faculty respondents rate librarians as important, ranking librarians behind only the faculty themselves and their teaching assistants, both of whom serve as instructors of record in the classroom. Librarians are very/important to 82% of IAS respondents vs. 61% UC Berkeley-wide, especially for their role in contributing to students' success. In addition, librarians are equally important to IAS faculty respondents as academic advisors.

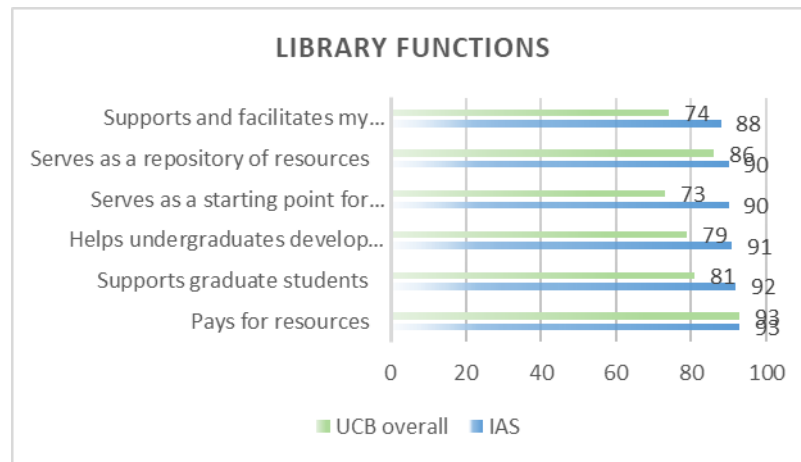


The word "librarian" is general enough to include all the library service providers. In this case, it could particularly mean the area studies librarian who works as the liaison to the IAS department. Area studies librarians curate distinctive collections and work as the mediator between the collections and the users' community. According to Carter and Whittaker, in their article on the similarities

between special collections and area studies collections, they share the following commonalities:

- “a high level of expertise in a distinguishing area
- highly focused collection development
- special handling and processing concerns (languages, fragility, format)
- a targeted but international user community (in addition to a more generalized group of local users)
- existing elements of the desired intensive liaison model
- shared history of positioning as outsiders, as siloed, or as different from the larger library system.”⁸

In my view, and based on the list above, one may guess that area studies librarians are important to IAS faculty due to their “special” role in supporting IAS faculty research and teaching.

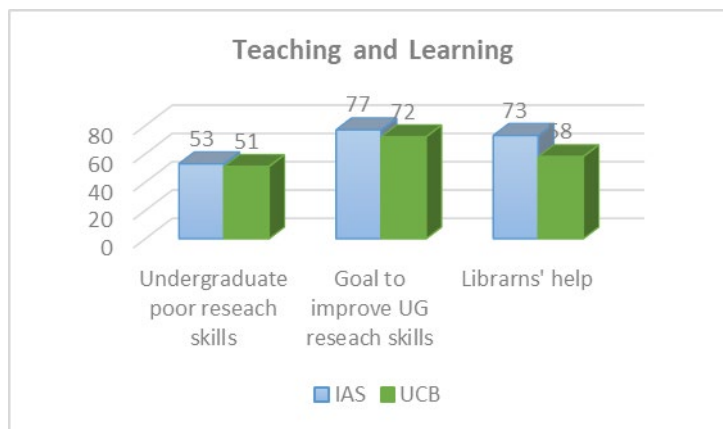


Q. 26. All the library functions are valued by faculty university-wide, but more valued by IAS faculty respondents. Not surprisingly, “the library pays for resources” came as the first choice for all faculty

⁸ Lisa R. Carter and Beth M. Whittaker, “Area Studies and Special Collections: Shared Challenges, Shared Strength,” *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 15, no. 2 (Mar. 2015): 353–373. *EBSCOhost*, DOI:10.1353/pla.2015.0017.

respondents, followed by supporting students, serving as a starting point, serving as a repository of resources, supporting research activities, and helping increase research productivity, in descending order. In their answers to this question, IAS faculty re-confirm the value of the library for them in all aspects. Given that, the library could use the value of these functions reflected in these responses to advocate for continued or additional investment from the university.

F. Teaching and Learning



Q. 30. More than half of the faculty respondents in both IAS and UC Berkeley-wide believe that their undergraduate students have poor research skills, particularly in locating and evaluating scholarly information. In response, about three quarters of faculty respondents in both groups indicated that improving undergraduate students' research skills is an important educational goal. Also close to three quarters of the IAS faculty respondents, versus about 60% of faculty respondents university-wide, indicated that librarians in the university library contribute significantly to developing students' research skills.

Conclusion

International and area studies faculty have special characteristics that are relatively similar to the characteristics of the faculty university-wide, but in some cases, IAS faculty follow various research techniques and practices that are different or unique. Accordingly, when it comes to IAS faculty and their information needs, these unique characteristics, practices, types of resources, and languages should be factored in when libraries and librarians are shaping services and collections for this group.

Based on the survey findings for IAS faculty, here is a list of recommendations:

Discovery and Access:

1. Obtaining well-known disciplinary databases and making them easily accessible is useful to IAS faculty, as they use them as the start point to finding new articles and monographs.
2. The library catalog is important to IAS faculty, as they use it as the second important starting point. Based on that, enhancements in the library catalog in both content, discoverability, and usability should help IAS faculty finding resources easier and faster.
3. IAS faculty routinely rely on the library as well as freely available resources. They also value the collections available through other institutions as well as their own personal collections. For this reason the connection between the library and the IAS faculty should be kept active in order to know what is needed. In some cases, and according to agreed-upon limits, libraries may compensate IAS faculty for materials the faculty member purchases during research trips.
4. IAS faculty value collections available to them through ILL at other institutions. They understand that international and foreign-language collections have special characteristics and require special skills and funding support that influence the extent and the depth of the collection in libraries. For these reasons, they rely on the ILL network for resources that they do not have immediate access to through their home institutions. Expanding the ILL network and extending the loan period for ILL materials will greatly help faculty in general and IAS faculty in particular.

Research Practice and Format:

5. Print books are still the most valued format for faculty in IAS, but in addition, they value electronic books and use them in research and teaching. They value electronic books for usability and navigation reasons, but for deep reading and analysis they value print books. Mixing between the two formats will be valued by IAS faculty, especially for books needed for teaching in assignments that require multiple or concurrent access to specific parts of the text.

Material Type:

6. Maintaining library collections of all types of resources including books, peer-reviewed journals, primary sources, conference papers, and media resources is valued by IAS faculty.

Research Dissemination and Publication:

7. Monographs and journal articles are the top publishing venues for IAS faculty. Also, for selecting a specific journal, high impact factor as well as no cost to publish are the top factors. IAS faculty also value that the journal is accessible in developing countries, which could mean publishing in translations or in languages other than English. Thus, collecting journals with high impact factor, or supporting journals that are freely available to authors and readers, are valued by faculty in IAS.

8. No cost to publish was the third factor used to select a specific journal to publish in, especially for IAS faculty. This could be linked to the survey finding that faculty in IAS do not get the same level of external funding support as others. Knowing this, IAS faculty could be one of the groups to target regarding funding support for publishing in open access, in particular, when payment for publishing is required.

Role of the Library

9. All library functions are valued by UC Berkeley faculty, but more valued by IAS faculty. The most obviously valued function is that the library secures access to resources, which is not easy or not straightforward for materials in area studies or foreign languages. For that, libraries need to secure adequate funding and hire staff with language expertise and area studies knowledge to provide the

appropriate research support services to IAS faculty and researchers on campus.

10. In addition, librarians are very important/important to most of the IAS faculty. Librarians help faculty in many ways, but most importantly in collection development as well as participating in developing undergraduate research skills. Librarians should always be well-connected to IAS faculty in order to be effective in providing research support, where and when it is needed.

Appendix

Selected Survey Questions for IAS

Q. 1. When you explore the scholarly literature to find new journal articles and monographs relevant to your research interests, how do you most often begin your process? Select one of the following:

Q. 2. You may employ a variety of different tactics to “keep up” with current scholarship in your field on a regular basis. Please use the scales below to rate from 10 to 1 how important each of the following methods is for staying current with new scholarship in your field. [10 = extremely important; 1 = not at all important]

Q. 3. Please use the 10 to 1 scales below to indicate how well each statement describes your point of view—a 10 equals “Extremely well” and a 1 equals “Not at all well.” You may pick any number on the scale. The higher the number, the better you think the statement describes your point of view. The lower the number, the less you think the statement describes your point of view. Please note: The phrase “scholarly monograph,” which appears in this question and in other questions throughout this survey, refers to a single volume book published by a scholar for an academic audience.

Q. 4. Below is a list of ways you may use a scholarly monograph. Please think about doing each of these things with a scholarly monograph in print format or in digital format, and use the scales below to indicate how much easier or harder it is to perform each activity in print or digital format. Please select one answer for each item.

Q. 5. When you think about the journal articles and scholarly monographs that you routinely use—for research as well as for teaching—how important are each of the following sources? [10 =extremely important; 1 = not at all important]

Q. 6. When you want a scholarly monograph or journal article that you do not have immediate access to through your college or university library’s physical or digital collections, how often do you use each of the following methods to seek access to that material?

Q. 9. [contingent on respondent conducting academic research] You may have the opportunity to share the findings of your scholarly research in a variety of different formats. Please use the scales below to indicate how often you have shared the findings of your scholarly research in each of the following ways in the past five years.

Q. 10. [contingent on respondent conducting academic research] When it comes to influencing your decisions about journals in which to publish an article of yours, how important to you is each of the following characteristics of an academic journal? [10= extremely important; 1 = not at all important]

Q. 18. [contingent on respondent conducting academic research] In the past five years, have you received or are you currently receiving external funding for your scholarly research from a public or government grant-making organization (such as the NSF, NIH, NEH, etc.)?

Q. 25. How important or unimportant are each of the following in contributing to student success at your college or university? [7 = very important; 1 = very unimportant]

Q. 26. How important is it to you that your college or university library provides each of the functions below or serves in the capacity listed below? [6 = extremely important; 1 = not at all important]

Q. 30. [respondent has taught any type of course in past 2 years] Please use the 10 to 1 scales below to indicate how well each statement below describes your point of view. [10 = extremely well; 1 = not at all well]

MT. 1. Scholars draw on a variety of different types of scholarly materials in their research. How important to your research is each of the following types of materials? [10 = extremely important; 1 = not at all important]

MT. 2. Some scholars use primary source materials, such as archival materials, historical newspapers, manuscripts, or images, in their teaching and research. Do you use these types of primary source materials in your teaching or research? Please select one answer.

Information Use, Information Needs, and Information Behavior of Graduate Students at Kuwait University

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Abstract

This study investigates the information use (IU), information needs (IN), and information behavior (IB) of graduate students at Kuwait University (KU) to gain deeper understanding of the supporting role of KU libraries for research. In-depth semi-structured interviews, a thematic analysis, and a cross-case analysis were used in the second phase of a mixed methods study to gain insight into the information activities of 48 graduate students studying in four colleges: Engineering, Arts, Science, and Law. Whitley's theory was used as a framework to help understand the influence of disciplinary cultures in shaping the IU and IB of graduate students along their research process. Factors related to the contextual culture of the discipline were found to influence the students' IU and IB. This study provides a domain analytic approach to the IU and IB of graduate students in a KU situation.

Keywords

Domain analysis, information use, information needs, information behavior, research process, graduate students, universities, Kuwait¹

1. Introduction

Kuwait University (KU) was founded in 1966, and it is the only public research institution in the state of Kuwait. There are now 17

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colleges offering 83 undergraduate and 89 graduate programs. The College of Graduate Studies (CGS) was established in 1977; since then it has witnessed a significant expansion in academic programs, reaching 89 graduate programs with approximately 1,600 academic staff and 3,136 postgraduate students (Kuwait University 2019). KU Colleges' libraries are organized under the supervision of the Kuwait University Libraries Administration (KULA), whose mission is to support teaching, learning, scholarship, and research within KU and the local community by providing quality access to its information resources. The KULA collections cover both Arabic and non-Arabic materials. The colleges' libraries provide all the facilities and functions to be expected from a university library service (Kuwait University Libraries Administration 2018).

This paper discusses information use (IU) at KU, where IU is concerned with understanding what information sources people choose and prefer to make sense of their situation. Use of information was conceived by Wilson (1999) as the final stage of a process that begins with recognition of an information need. People tend to use information sources that are accessible, offered, convenient, and trustworthy. Therefore, a habit of IU can be developed when people choose a trustworthy source depending on the questions in their mind or a problem they face. The most important aspect of IU is the context in which people's questions or problems arise. Despite the fact that IU can be applied to any kind of human interaction with information sources, its meaning can differ depending on the context (Taylor 1986).

IU is linked to a group of key concepts, such as information needs (IN), in which students recognize that their knowledge is insufficient to satisfy their goals (Case 2012). Thus, a conscious effort develops to acquire information in response to the student's IN, which constitutes information seeking behavior (ISB). The totality of students' behaviors in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive ISB, and IU was conceived by Wilson (2000) as information behavior (IB). Three research questions are posed as follows:

- RQ1. Does the cultural context of the discipline influence the IU and IB of graduate students along their research stages?
- RQ2. To what extent do the IN affect the IU and IB of the graduate students?

RQ3. What factors affect graduate students' use of the library during their research process?

Hopefully the answers to these questions may assist KULA in designing an intervention program that can support graduate students through their research activities.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Graduate Students Information Use and Information Behavior

A growing number of scholars have recently investigated the ISB of graduate students as a specific user group (e.g., Vezzosi 2009; Ge 2010; Satish-Kumar et al. 2011; Al-Muomen et al. 2012; Catalano 2013; Anyaogu 2014; Balog et al. 2018; Moore and Singley 2019), but not many studies over the past decade have focused on their IU as a single phenomenon.

A few recent studies have investigated the IU and IB of engineering graduate students. However, not many studies have investigated the IB of electrical engineers as a unique user group. Electrical engineering graduate students' IU has been studied by Chu and Law (2008), who found that students have specific needs (e.g., software to help with designing) and, therefore, using IEEE Xplore can meet most of their IN. Allard et al. (2008) argued that information needed by engineering students can fall into two types: technical information (documents about technical solutions) and contextual information (undocumented data about the context of the design process)—therefore, colleagues are the best source of information. Balog et al. (2018) emphasized that electrical engineering researchers prefer face-to-face contact with their supervisors and peers when they need help and use online resources and databases, and they rarely use the physical library. They believed that the library's physical collection should be transformed into online resources (Tucci 2011).

Many studies have examined the IB of arts and humanities scholars. However, few studies have taken account of the unique characteristics of the history field, as each discipline in the humanities has its own IN and research culture. According to Dalton and Charnigo (2004), humanities scholars need a wide range of primary materials, though books and journals are the most frequently used formats. Tahir et al. (2008; 2010) confirmed that the library is still the main source of information for humanities scholars.

However, Moore and Singley (2019) contradict this claim, showing that the IN of humanities graduate students could not be met by any one library's collection; their diverse and expansive use of information resources resulted in them turning to other sources such as websites, social media, and other alternative materials. For them, the world was their collection, and their university library is only a small part of their collection. Rutner and Schonfeld (2012) argued that some historians travel overseas to explore archival collections related to their research topic, as well as travel to seek advice from local experts in their subject area. Vezzosi (2009) added that conversation with colleagues is a critical resource for humanities graduate students in their research activities. Moreover, Ge (2010) and Barrett (2005) have both emphasized that the use of e-resources in the humanities is increasing, particularly among doctoral students.

Currently, there is a dearth of scholarly work on the IB of microbiology graduate students as a specific user group. A study conducted by Satish-Kumar et al. (2011) found that life scientists need information to build a research background, keep up-to-date in their area of interest, and obtain more specific information. They express a positive attitude towards the library and often access its scientific digital collections to fulfil their IN. However, Nicholas et al. (2010) and Siwach and Malik (2019) contradict this, showing that more preference is given to search engines than to browsing the library. Sethi and Panda (2012) argued that the main e-resources used by life sciences researchers are e-journals that are subscribed to by their library, as well as open access (OA) journals. According to Aqil and Ahmed (2011), Science Direct is usually utilized by the majority of life sciences researchers to meet their specific IN. Smith (2003) confirmed that integrating information literacy in the curriculum is valuable in developing the information skills capabilities of science graduate students. Singh and Satija (2008) emphasized that life sciences students use their supervisors as a secondary source of information after the library.

Few studies have been conducted to explore the IB of law graduate students. Several studies have focused on the ISB of law researchers. According to Otike (1999), legal researchers use a variety of information; in turn, their IN are influenced by the nature of their work. They appear to need two types of information: detailed information (available in law journals, judgements, or textbooks) and factual information (basic data that normally takes less time to

consult). In a study conducted by Ossai (2011), law students were found to be heavy users of library resources throughout their academic course. Anyaogu (2014) showed that textbooks were the most used source of information by law graduate students. However, Al-Daihani and Oppenheim (2008) found that law researchers consult their colleagues before moving on to print sources. According to Vijayakumar and Balasubramanian (2019), consulting one's personal collection is the first choice for law researchers, and the second choice goes to law digest. Bhardwaj (2012) found that most of the law master's students are aware of electronic databases and use them frequently to locate case laws. Al-Daihani and Oppenheim (2008) confirmed that the majority of law researchers at KU scan only one or two journals, and that books remain the most popular information source for their research.

It is evident from previous studies that the discipline has a major influence on the IU and IB of end users. Reviewed studies revealed that students' use of information might differ among disciplines; therefore, the researcher looked at the disciplinary differences in students' IU and IB. Most of the previous studies have concentrated on the ISB of graduate students. However, few studies have been conducted to explore the IU of graduate students. Moreover, most of the previous studies have been conducted in the contexts of developed countries. Although Al-Muomen et al. (2012) studied the ISB of graduate students in KU, this study did not concentrate on graduate students' IU as a single phenomenon. To add depth to the previous studies, the current study focuses entirely on the IU and IB of graduate students as it relates to their research process.

2.2. Whitley's Theory: Domain Analytic Approach

Whitley's theory is one of the most common theories used by scholars (e.g., Fry and Talja 2004, 2007; Fry 2006a, b; Matzat 2004; Talja et al. 2007) to determine the factors that shape researchers' interactions with information and communication practices. Two dimensions were proposed to use when formulating the intellectual and social organization of scholarly fields, namely "mutual dependence" and "task uncertainty" (Fry and Talja 2007). The application of these two concepts reflects the degree of interdependence between researchers within and between disciplines in making a valid contribution to existing knowledge (mutual dependence) and the degree of uncertainty in producing and

evaluating that knowledge (task uncertainty). These two explanatory variables, “task uncertainty” and “mutual dependence,” are usually interrelated and comparative (Whitley 2000). Variations in these two concepts help to explain the disciplinary cultural differences that shaped the IU and IB of the graduate students during their research process (Talja et al. 2007). For instance, a high degree of “mutual dependence” promotes a low degree of “task uncertainty”; this disciplinary culture is readily catered to by digital resources. A discipline with a high degree of “task uncertainty” and a low degree of “mutual dependence” is less successful in taking control over channels of communication (Fry 2006a). Whitley further divides “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” into two sub-categories: strategic and functional dependence and strategic and technical uncertainty. The consequence of increasing the degree of “strategic dependency” is greater reliance upon a particular group of colleagues for accessing materials (Fry 2006b). The consequence of increasing the degree of “technical uncertainty” is greater reliance upon individuals and direct control of how research is carried out (Whitley 2000).

To explore the applicability of Whitley’s theory in explaining and understanding the differences between the domains in shaping digital resources, Fry and Talja (2007) conducted a study covering seven fields in the form of qualitative case studies. The study combines data from two independent studies conducted by Talja (2002) and Fry (2006a); both used the same thematic analytic approach. The two studies were similar enough that a wide comparative analysis could be used to synthesize the findings. The fields studied by Fry (2006a) were high-energy physics, social/cultural geography, and corpus-based linguistics, while Talja (2002) investigated environmental biology, nursing science, history, literature, and cultural studies. Fry and Talja (2007) concluded that the nature of the disciplines, their social structure, degree of integration, and the nature of knowledge produced have a great influence on shaping the studied fields’ communication practices. A high degree of “mutual dependence” plays a central role in shaping the design and use of e-resources (e.g., high-energy physics), while a high degree of “task uncertainty” results in the heavy reliance of the studied field on formal print publications (e.g., social/cultural geography). This study confirmed that Whitley’s domain analytic concepts offer a powerful approach for understanding and explaining

the differences between the disciplines in shaping scholarly communication in environments where networking is critical.

3. Research Design/Methodology

This research uses a mixed methods approach in the form of a case study design. In the first phase (quantitative), a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data from four colleges, which were selected purposely to be surveyed—Engineering, Arts, Science, and Law—as each have specialized libraries serving one discipline. The questionnaire was developed containing 29 closed and 2 open questions, and responses were obtained from 578 students studying in these four colleges, as discussed in Al-Motawah et al. (2018). Specialized fields were selected randomly from the four colleges—Electrical Engineering (EE), Islamic History (IH), Microbiology (MC), and Public Law (PL)—for the second (qualitative) phase. All the selected specialized fields only offer master’s degree programs. A single nested case study design was adopted based on Thomas’s (2012). The case study can be defined as a “local knowledge case,” that is, “... an example of something in your personal experience...” (Thomas 2012, 77), because the researcher was familiar with KU libraries from her own experience of being a master’s student there. The case is also exploratory, as there is little previous research on this topic in the specific context of Kuwait. The case would be instrumental rather than intrinsic, since the main purpose of studying KU libraries is to gain a deeper understanding of their role in supporting graduate students’ research. Attempting to gain a better understanding of KU’s situation by studying small working units—the EE, IH, MC, and PL departments—would suggest the drawing picture approach (illustrative), where depicting or describing the particular situation of KU is accomplished by identifying the relation between the working units and the processes that are embedded in them. This enables a connection to be made between the different sides of the phenomenon (IU) that makes the major differences between these working units understandable. In this study, the researcher uses a conceptual framework based on the dimensions of Whitley’s theory to explore the cultural difference between the studied cases and the graduate students’ IU and IB at KU. Therefore, the case study was undertaken to test the applicability of this theory in a library context rather than to build theory. According to Thomas (2012), the adopted case study is referred to as “nested.”

3.1. Participants

The researcher used a stratified sample method for the purpose of the analysis. From the four specialized fields (EE, IH, MC, PL), 48 graduate students were purposefully selected. The targeted population was divided into strata (homogenous sub-groups within a population; n=12 for each field). The sample was chosen to include graduate students at all stages of their graduate programs, as discussed in Al-Motawah (2016).

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the experience of the participants regarding using the library in order to obtain students' reflections on the role of KU libraries in supporting their research. The semi-structured interview was prepared following the steps of Cassell and Symon (2011) as a useful guide, including open-ended questions (see the Appendix). The questions were formulated based on the quantitative findings that emerged from the first phase of the study, as discussed by Al-Motawah et al. (2018). The collected data was digitally recorded, transcribed, and translated into English. The translated data was imported into NVivo 10.0 and then the coding procedure was carried out. Following this, they were analyzed thematically based on Whitley's (2000) two analytical concepts. The coding procedure progressed through two levels of coding: first cycle coding (open coding) and second cycle coding. The second level coding adopted two approaches, one of which built on the emergent codes from the first level inductively and the other by using Whitley's theory framework as a guide in coding and categorizing the data deductively. The second cycle codes were refined and clustered into credible themes and sub-themes (Figure1).

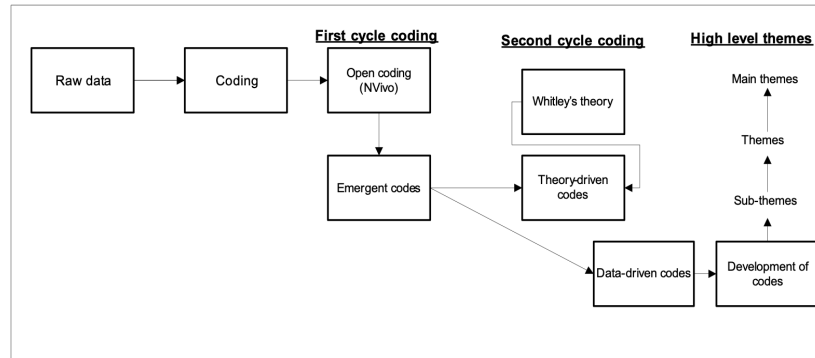


Figure 1. The coding process for the raw data during the qualitative data analysis

As the analysis developed, a new analytic framework was created. The resulting analytical framework has been used to structure the way in which the cases studied were described and analyzed, based on seven themes that emerged from the data (cultural identity factors): (1) the nature of the discipline; (2) information needs; (3) study mode; (4) students' personal experience; (5) library services; (6) external sources; and (7) financial adequacy. The newly-proposed themes that resulted from the analyzed data suggest that cultural identity represents a set of factors that shape the patterns of graduate students' interactions with the library and information resources. Whitley's theory and key domain analytic concepts of "mutual dependence" and "task uncertainty" were applied to explain the variations in IU and IB across the studied disciplines, and then the studied cases were contrasted and compared using a cross-case analysis approach to identify the differences between them.

4. Findings

Based on the domain analysis, the results revealed that the "cultural identity" of the discipline has an impact on shaping the IU and IB of graduate students.

4.1 Cultural Context Shaping the Difference between the Disciplines

Based on the coded responses of the questionnaire, a significant difference was found between the four subject groups in using the library, as discussed in Al-Motawah et al. (2018). Across the studied

cases (EE, IH, MC, and PL), a difference in the degree of “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” was also found. For instance, the degree of “mutual dependence” in EE is high, accompanied by a low degree of “task uncertainty,” while in MC the degree of “mutual dependence” is moderate, coupled with a moderate degree of “task uncertainty” compared to EE. However, in IH the degree of “mutual dependence” is low, coupled with a high degree of “task uncertainty.” PL is categorized as having a moderate degree of “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” compared to IH and EE. Since “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” are relative concepts, they cannot be measured in absolute terms. Therefore, the studied cases are categorized in relation to one another based on the presence of qualitative indicators related to culture of the discipline (common set of concepts, attitudes, values, epistemologies, and assumptions held by an academic member of a discipline, conveyed to new members and shaping their view, production, and sharing of knowledge), such as a hierarchy of the problems, establishment of standardized research techniques, and the degree of consensus over methods and integrative collaborative work.

Whitley (2000) argues that “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” are each composed of two different analytical elements that are related either to reputational control (strategic mutual dependence and strategic task uncertainty), or to the coordination of research techniques, strategies, and outcomes (functional mutual dependence and technical task uncertainty). The combination of possible variations in the degree of “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” generates seven major types of disciplines or sub-disciplines. Of particular relevance to the four disciplines being analyzed in this study are what Whitley describes as “conceptually integrated bureaucracies” (EE), “fragmented adhocracies” (IH), “professional adhocracies” (MC), and “partitioned bureaucracies” (PL) (Table 1).

Table 1. Differences in the cultural context and types of discipline of the studied cases based on Whitley's theory concepts

Studied disciplines	Cultural characteristics				Types of disciplines
	Mutual dependence		Task uncertainty		
	Strategic ² dependence	Functional ³ dependence	Strategic ⁴ uncertainty	Technical ⁵ uncertainty	
EE	H	H	L	L	conceptually integrated bureaucracies
IH	L	L	H	H	fragmented adhocracies
MC	L	H	H	L	professional adhocracies
PL	H	L	L	H	partitioned bureaucracies

*L=Low, H=High, L+H or H+L=Moderate

Conceptually integrated bureaucracies, such as EE, where the research culture has a relative scarcity of facilities and resources, means that, to gain access to the required resources, researchers have to convince a small group of colleagues of the importance of their research. Results are predictable, and the theoretical implications of research outcomes are easy to distinguish. The highly specific nature of the research in this field leads to considerable coordination in sharing results between specialist groups. The concentration and control over research and key resources in this field is high (hence the low degree of technical and strategic task uncertainty and the high degree of functional and strategic mutual dependence).

² "The extent to which researchers have to persuade colleagues of the significance and importance of their problems and approaches" (Whitley 2000, 88).

³ "The extent to which researchers have to use the specific results, ideas, and procedures of fellow specialists in order to construct knowledge claims recognised by their peers" (Whitley 2000, 88).

⁴ "Uncertainty about intellectual priorities, the significance of research topics and preferred way of tackling them" (Whitley 2000, 123).

⁵ "The extent to which work techniques are well understood and produce reliable results" (Whitley 2000, 121).

Fragmented adhocracies, such as IH, is where the research culture is less likely to coordinate over problems and results or to share resources, which makes it difficult to coordinate research problems, techniques, and task outcomes. Results in this field are unpredictable, and their presentation must be in more detail. Because of the wide range of research problems (topics) and approaches, searching for information comes from a wide variety of resources. Therefore, concentration and control over research and key resources in this field are low (resulting from a high degree of technical and strategic task uncertainty and the low degree of functional and strategic mutual dependence).

Professional adhocracies: heterogeneity is an integral part of the research culture of MC, where there is little concern with the hierarchy of the research problem, no single reputational group to which to address developing research strategies, and there are a variety of funding sources for conducting research. For instance, research may be employed by hospitals, private firms, universities, or research centers. This may account for the high degree of strategic task uncertainty, since judgements about the relevance of outcomes are likely to vary from one reputational group to another. However, skills and technical procedures are highly standardized as technical task uncertainty is relatively low. The consequence of high strategic and low technical uncertainty promotes a moderate degree of concentration and control over research and key resources in this field.

Partitioned bureaucracies, such as PL, is when the research culture has a discrete difference in research organization between the analytical theoretical core and the applied peripheral areas (hence the low level of functional mutual dependence), meaning that the lack of technical control over empirical phenomena will threaten theoretical coherence. Research problems and goals in this field are restricted, stable, and tightly structured, while the results are unstable and difficult to interpret (accounting for the high level of strategic mutual dependence). It seems that in this field, the degree of “strategic uncertainty” needs to be sufficiently low to be able to develop a consistent approach through the development of technical standards and protocols to resolve particular sets of professional issues around a specific research project. The degree of “technical uncertainty” tends to be high, accounting for the dominant knowledge produced by a personally controlled discipline such as law; this promotes high

concentration and control over local resources, and low concentration and control over international resources.

To answer the research question "Does the cultural context of the discipline influence the IU and IB of graduate students...?" it was found that the pattern of IU and IB is affected by the domain cultural context in each studied case.

In EE, the high degree of "functional dependence" strongly influences the widespread use of the IEEE database as an information resource. The highly specialized nature of the research in this field leads to considerable coordination in sharing results between specialist groups; this shaped the centralized IB of graduate students in terms of accessing and using digital resources. Therefore, they prefer to access and use centralized field-base databases, such as IEEE, to fulfil their IN, while the high degree of "strategic dependence" strongly influences the graduate students' reliance upon their supervisor for accessing and acquiring the materials required to fulfil their IN. A high degree of "mutual dependence" shapes the students' preferences to access and use e-resources more than print ones. This may be accompanied by a low degree of "task uncertainty" (both technical and strategic). The low degree of "technical uncertainty" in EE also strongly influences the high degree of concentration and control over key resources, and so this field uses a centralized field-based communication system via digital resources. This also strongly influences the high dependency of graduate students on accessing and using e-journals as the main sources of information. Because the laboratory outcomes in this field are stable and predictable, articles are often considered to be the most common form of communication.

In IH, the low degree of "mutual dependence" (both functional and strategic) strongly influences the high reliance of graduate students on formal print publications as information resources to meet their IN. The participants in this field confirmed that they prefer to access and use print resources more than electronic ones, because, in this field, it is less imperative to coordinate problems and results or to share resources as a consequence of decreasing "mutual dependence." This may be coupled with increasing "task uncertainty" (both strategic and technical), which makes it difficult to coordinate research problems, techniques, and task outcomes. The high degree of "strategic uncertainty" has a strong influence on the graduate students' search for information from a wide variety of

resources in IH because of the wide range of research problems (topics) and approaches. While the high degree of “technical uncertainty” has a strong effect in shaping students’ independence in searching and accessing information compared to EE, they depend on themselves to carry out their research, which is achieved by direct contact with experts in the field to help interpret their results and by searching the literature. Therefore, the library plays a central role as an information source, as do archival institutions. The high dependence of graduate students on books as the main sources of information is also strongly influenced by the high degree of “technical uncertainty,” as the results in this field are unstable and their presentation must be more detailed. Therefore, the articles can be quite long, and the research findings are usually communicated in books. This shapes the preferences of the graduate students for books over journal articles; the latter become less likely to be read or cited by the graduate students compared to EE. Whitley (2000) argued that in a field where the degree of both strategic and functional dependence is low, decentralized control over accessing resources can be observed. Therefore, the consequences of a low degree of “mutual dependence” shaped the decentralized IB of the graduate students in terms of accessing and using information resources.

In MC, the medium degree of “mutual dependence” (high functional and low strategic dependency) strongly influences the students’ preferences to access and use multidisciplinary databases, such as Science Direct, to fulfil their IN. This is because there is little overall concern with a hierarchy of goals, which shapes students’ dependence on searching and accessing information by themselves rather than through their supervisor compared to EE. The medium degree of “task uncertainty” (high strategic and low technical uncertainty) in this field shapes the decentralized IB of the students, as they use information resources from other fields, such as health science, marine ecology, and biochemistry. This is because research problems are varied, as in IH, which also shapes their dependence on using e-journals as the main information resources. This is because research results are stable and usually communicated by articles, as in EE. The variation in theoretical structure in this field shaped the students’ preference to access and use both electronic and print resources.

Conversely, in PL, with a medium degree of “mutual dependence” (low functional and high strategic dependence), the low

degree of “functional dependence” has a strong influence on the high reliance of graduate students on formal print publications as information resources to meet their IN, as in IH. This is because the results are unstable and difficult to interpret. The high degree of “strategic dependence” strongly influences the graduate students’ dependence, to some extent, upon their supervisors as information sources because the problems and goals are restricted, stable, and tightly structured, similar to EE. In respect to the medium degree of “task uncertainty” (high technical and low strategic uncertainty), it seems that to resolve particular professional issues around specific research problems (e.g., Kuwait law issues), the degree of “strategic uncertainty” needs to be sufficiently low to be able to develop a solid approach through the development of standardized techniques, while the degree of “technical uncertainty” tends to be high because of the dominant knowledge produced by personally controlled disciplines, such as law, that increased the concentration and control over local resources. Therefore, this field concentrates on using local resources, such as the Kuwait Lawyers database, for primary resources rather than international databases as in EE. The high degree of “technical uncertainty” has strongly influenced the heavy reliance of students on their individual control to carry out their research and in shaping their independence in searching and accessing information without supervisor interference compared to EE. This is achieved by relying on personal contact (e.g., legal advisor) through their personal network to make sense of their results and by searching the literature. Therefore, the library plays an important role as an information source to fulfil the students’ IN. However, students in this field access and use a variety of legal information sources, which increases the decentralized control over resources at the international level. They use books as the main sources of information, similar to IH. At the same time, they use journal articles, as in EE, because of the limited technical control over the empirical phenomenon in this field. Therefore, the consequences of a moderate degree of both “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” shaped the students’ information IB in two ways, centralized at the local level and decentralized at the international level.

Thus “mutual dependence” and “task uncertainty” appeared to be contextual factors that shaped the pattern of IU and IB of graduate students in each field based on the degree of concentration and control over the research process and resources.

4.2. The Influence of Information Needs on Information Use and Behavior

In answering the research question “To what extent do the IN affect the IU and IB of the graduate students?” it was found that the differences between the disciplines with regard to the IU and IB related to the differences in their IN. Each discipline had specific requirements that shaped its IN. According to this study, IN entailed the need for students to use specific sources of information to complete their research. This factor includes four items: information awareness (in EE), information skills capability (in MC), information culture (in PL), and IT tool needs (in IH). It was found that lack of awareness of the importance of the library in meeting the student’s IN, particularly in the initial stages, has a negative impact on using its resources and services in EE, which developed along the research stages. However, confidence in being able to identify the appropriate information source to meet the MC students’ IN was found to be a positive factor that affects the use of library resources and services from the very beginning. In PL, the development of the professional needs, according to the information culture, negatively affected the use of the library during the research process. In IH, the information need item that shaped students’ use of the library’s online resources most was different, namely the need for IT tools, as the need for online search aids (e.g., online catalogue) was high in later stages, according to the growing need to speed up their research. This positively affected their use of the library’s online services during the research stages.

4.3. Factors Influencing Students’ Information Use and Behavior

Several factors have been explored that affect the IU and IB of graduate students in the context of KU, which enabled the third research question to be answered: “What factors affect graduate students’ use of the library through the research stages?” These key factors are:

a) Study mode

Students’ enrolment either part-time or full-time was found to be an influential factor in using the KU libraries for all the studied cases. This factor includes two elements: “availability” and “accessibility.” A number of items related to the two elements appeared to be a barrier to the efficient use of the libraries. The

inability of part-time students to be on campus during the daytime, the unavailability of library services in the evenings, and the library's restrictions on its resources (e.g., thesis and book collections) and services negatively affected the IU and IB of graduate students and the supporting role of KU libraries.

I used [to] mainly ... search on the Internet because I am an employee who works during the daytime; thus, I had no time to go to the library in the morning. I could access the Internet easily from my office at work and search for the information I needed. (EE student)

b) Students' personal experiences

KU library services performance was found to be an important factor in predicting some patterns of IU and IB of the graduate students. Limited subscriptions to leading databases and the shortage of a specific Arabic book collection and Arabic database for the courses whose instruction language is Arabic were found to be barriers to efficient IU and IB in some cases.

The books available at Kuwait University Libraries seemed general and not specialised[.] When I looked at the books, I didn't find sufficient information related to my topic... The resources available at Kuwait University libraries are insufficient to meet my research needs, and I can say that it was able to cover only half of my information needs but not all. (IH student)

However, feeling negative about the library services from the very beginning and having a positive attitude towards building a personal collection from the earlier stages in some cases was found to negatively affect the role of the library in the later stages.

c) Library information services

Training and support appeared to be the most important factors influencing the IU and IB of the graduate students. These factors include library service publicity, self training, and module training. Promotion of the services was found to be a major factor in shaping the use of library training courses. Ineffective publicity of library

services affected the use of the library negatively across all studied cases.

Did they announce a workshop? No, I didn't hear about that. I'd like to attend this type of workshop, because, to be honest with you, I've no idea how to use the online resources. (IH student)

Integrating a training session as part of the syllabus of some courses was found to be a positive factor in some cases. The availability of one-on-one sessions only in the daytime was found to be a barrier to part-time students using this service.

d) External information sources

The use of other sources available outside the university libraries was also an important factor that affected the IU and IB of the graduate students. This factor includes: non-university libraries, supervisor's support, and specialists in the field. The key factor that was found to be highly important in the use of the library was the need to use specialists in the field as information sources.

I would ask experts, including academic staff, legal advisors, and others, who might have enough knowledge on my topic... So, I not only seek information from one information channel but from varied information channels. (PL student)

Using the supervisor's support and other libraries located off the KU campus affected the use of the library negatively.

e) Financial adequacy

The ability to pay for the information sources needed was found to be the main factor in shaping the IU and IB of the graduate students at KU. Being able to buy a subscription to a database provided by the library to use at home and buying journal articles or other resources online also negatively affected the use of KU libraries.

I subscribed personally to the journal to be able to receive the issues regularly. I also went to the Council of Scientific

Publishing in Kuwait to review and bought the older one ... I subscribed for four years to the Journal of Law. (PL student)

This behavior of the graduate students appeared to be the main barrier to the effective use of the library for research purposes.

5. Discussion

The results of this study show that the cultural context of the EE field reflects a high degree of “mutual dependence” and a low degree of “task uncertainty.” This determines centralized control over research and resources, which in turn shapes the IU and IB of graduate students. The high degree of “mutual dependence” shapes the EE students’ preferences to access and use centralized field-based digital resources (e.g., IEEE Explore database). This is consistent with Fry and Talja’s (2007) findings, where a high degree of “mutual dependence” plays a central role in shaping the use of online resources. The consequence of increasing the degree of “mutual dependence” was found to be highly influenced by the EE students’ reliance on their supervisors to access and acquire the necessary information resources. This is in accordance with Balog et al.’s (2018) findings, where EE researchers prefer face-to-face contact with their supervisors/professors and peers once they need help. They prefer to use online resources and rarely use the physical library. The reflection of a high degree of “mutual dependence” in this field may explain why EE graduate students at KU are less likely to visit the library in person and prefer to access it remotely through the departmental website, especially as their research culture is usually based on lab work.

Regarding IH, the cultural context of this field is characterized by a low degree of “mutual dependence” and a high degree of “task uncertainty,” which determines decentralized control over research and resources. This is in line with Fry (2006a), who found that disciplines with a high degree of “task uncertainty” are less successful in taking control of the channels of communication. One major consequence of increasing degrees of “task uncertainty” is the dependence of IH students on themselves to carry out their research, through direct contact and literature searches, which increases their independence from their supervisors when searching and accessing information to meet their IN. This is compatible with Moore and Singley’s (2019) finding that the IN of humanities graduate students

could not be met by any one library's collection, their diverse and expansive use of information resources turning them to other sources such as websites and social media. For them, the world was their collection.

Concerning the MC field, the cultural structure reflects a moderate degree of "mutual dependence" and "task uncertainty" that determines decentralized control over the research and resources. The medium degree of "mutual dependence" shapes the MC students' preference to access and use multidisciplinary databases, such as Science Direct. This is in accordance with Aqil and Ahmed's (2011) findings that the majority of life sciences researchers use Science Direct to satisfy their IN. The consequence of the medium degree of "mutual dependence" was found to highly influence the MC students' independence from their supervisors when searching and accessing information. This is in line with Singh and Satija's (2008) results showing that life sciences students use their supervisors as the second source of information after the library. The consequences of the moderate degree of "mutual dependence" in this field may explain why MC students in the context of KU are highly dependent on the library to carry out their research and make less use of their supervisors as an information source compared to EE students. The consequence of the medium degree of "task uncertainty" in this field may explain why the MC students in the context of KU need to access and use information resources from other neighboring scientific fields, such as medical science, environmental science, and sometimes biochemistry.

In respect to PL, its cultural context reflects a medium degree of "mutual dependence" and a medium degree of "task uncertainty" that determine the decentralized control over resources at the international level and the centralized control over resources at the local level. The medium degree of "task uncertainty" shapes the PL students' preferences with regard to accessing and using local EIRs, such as the Kuwait Lawyers database, and their heavy reliance on individual control in conducting research, which can be achieved by depending on their personal networks and by searching the literature. The ambiguity of their results makes personal contact with legal advisors essential for interpreting them. This is in accordance with Al-Daihani and Oppenheim's (2008) findings: law researchers consult their colleagues before moving on to print sources. Participants in PL also show their independence from their

supervisors when searching and accessing information. These findings are in line with the study by Bhardwaj (2012), who found that the majority of law master's students are aware of the electronic database and use it frequently to locate case law. The medium degree of "task uncertainty" in this field may explain why PL students in the context of KU need to use unpublished information, such as "specialist commentaries," and why they depend on their personal networks to acquire this type of information in addition to the published information available at the library.

Regarding the influence of IN on the IU and IB of graduate students in the context of KU, four key factors emerged that affect their interaction with the library: information awareness (in EE), information skills capability (in MC), information culture (in PL), and IT tools needs (in IH). In the current study, it was found that EE students lack awareness about the importance of the library as an information source in the initial stage of their research compared to MC, IH, and PL. In the context of KU, this may be due to the fact that the EE program does not integrate library awareness sessions into the courses, which results in EE students starting college with a negative picture about the importance of the library as an information source. However, their information awareness increases in line with the development of their IN along the research process. Chu and Law (2008) emphasized that engineering students' IN grow during the research process based on their knowledge of their research topic. In IH, the situation is different regarding IN compared with EE, MC, and PL. It was found that using IT tools was associated with the increasing demands of the research process. Most IH participants in the first stage of their research confirmed that they used the library card catalogue to locate books. This may reflect the traditional culture of the Islamic history field, as traditional finding aids are preferred to electronic ones. In addition, the research culture of this field requires textual references to be dug out and reviewed item by item; therefore, the use of traditional tools at the beginning may help them to avoid missing any items contained in the library related to their research topic, particularly when they are carrying out background reading. Similar findings were disclosed by Chassanoff (2013), who states that history graduate students often use published finding aids or consult an archivist to locate primary sources in the early stage of their research. It was also found that the use of library IT tools developed among IH graduate students according to the

growing need to speed up their research in the later stages. Dalton and Charnigo (2004) and Rutner and Schonfeld (2012) confirmed that the application of e-resources has increased historians' use of online catalogues and guides in their effort to identify primary and secondary sources.

In MC, the situation is different compared to EE, IH, and PL. Confidence in being able to identify the appropriate information source to meet the students' IN was found to be a positive factor that affects the IU and IB from the very beginning. This may be related to the fact that integrating formal information literacy into courses designed by the Biology Department at KU at both the undergraduate and graduate levels makes students more familiar with the library services and identifies the important sources to meet their IN. Smith (2003) found that integrating information literacy in the curriculum is valuable in developing the information skills capabilities of science graduate students. However, their information skills capability increases based on the development of their IN, searching experiences, and supervisors' recommendations throughout the research stages.

In PL, information culture is an important factor in shaping PL students' IU and IB based on their IN in comparison to EE, MC, and IH. It was found that PL students' use of the library is controlled by the extent to which its resources and services can fulfil the theoretical and professional IN. It is evident from the results that the PL students have subject-specific needs to be fulfilled by relying on "specialist commentaries." This was confirmed by Al-Daihani and Oppenheim's (2008) finding that legal researchers in Kuwait regard commentaries as a very important source for detailed information. The results show that the Law Library does not provide this service to enable graduate students to fulfil their professional IN through consultations with legal experts, which affects its use negatively throughout the research stages. In the context of KU, it seems that the Law Library is unable to fulfil the professional or theoretical needs of PL students, which affects its use negatively throughout the research process. The study by Al-Daihani and Oppenheim (2008) revealed a similar finding—that the low use of the Law Library at KU by law researchers is due to its inability to fulfil their needs.

In respect to the factors that affected the IU and IB of the graduate students, the study mode was one factor that appeared to be a barrier to the efficient use of the libraries. Availability and

accessibility of the library was an issue that emerged relating to the study mode factor. The majority of part-time interviewees complained that they did not have enough time to visit the library physically. This was confirmed by Al-Muomen's (2009) finding that part-time study mode is an indicator of the reduced opportunity to visit the library, and those students are more likely to conduct their information search in offices or at home. Dissatisfaction with the length of the library's hours was an issue related to the availability of the library expressed by some EE and MC participants. There was no evidence provided by PL and IH participants regarding the same issue. This might be because these disciplines are theory-based subjects and students are not required to spend most of their time doing lab work, as in MC and EE, but have sufficient time to visit the library during its hours of operation. Restrictions on the use of library collections, such as the thesis and book collections, were also an issue that emerged relating to library accessibility. The majority of the participants in the study (part-time and full-time) were dissatisfied with the restrictions on borrowing or photocopying theses, which affects their use of the library negatively. This is in line with Al-Muomen et al. (2012); they believed that high levels of bureaucracy and restrictions on the availability and accessibility of types of information resources at KU act as barriers affecting the use of the library services.

Students' personal experiences were another important factor that affects the IU and IB of the graduate students. Performance of library services was an issue that emerged relating to the students' personal experiences. It was found that the limited subscriptions to subject-specific databases in MC negatively affected MC students' use of the library. This is in line with Sethi and Panda (2012), who found that a lack of library subscriptions to more foreign journals in the field of life sciences was one of the main factors that prevented graduate students from selectively using e-resources. Lack of specific books in Arabic relating to the students' specific topics was found to affect IH and PL participants' use of the library negatively. This was supported by Khan and Bhatti (2012), who found that the main problem encountered by law researchers is the unavailability of the required materials and the insufficient provision of library services in the Law Library. Students' experiences with ILL services perceiving the long process required for requesting unavailable documents affected their use of the library. It was found that the

majority of the participants across the studied disciplines complained about the long waiting times for this service, such as the one month to receive the requested manuscripts in IH. This is supported by Tucci (2011), who found that the ILL service needs updating; the inability of the ILL service to go outside the normal academic processes might force researchers to ignore the library as a gateway and encourage them to use the internet instead.

Negative feelings about the library developed by the majority of EE participants through their interactions with its services is another issue that affects the use of the library in the first stage. This may be because of their lack of knowledge about the services provided and the unavailability of subject librarians in the evenings. Tucci (2012) found that a lack of awareness about subject-specific databases resulted in using Google Scholar as an alternative source to the specialized database. In contrast, MC and IH participants were found to have positive feelings about their college libraries due to their communication with library staff from the beginning, as MC participants are full-time students and the library staff are available only during the daytime. In IH, only full-time participants provided a reflection of their communication experience with the library staff. This result reflects an organizational culture issue, as most employees at KU libraries finish work at 2 pm, including professional librarians. However, the majority of PL participants appeared to have a negative perception due to the poor collection of legal books, particularly books in Arabic. The lack of availability of the desired resources acted as a barrier to their use of the library in later research stages. Otiye (1999) found that academic lawyers started with the university library and then moved to other sources when the library was unable to provide them with the required materials. A positive attitude towards building personal research-related collections from the beginning is another issue that affects the use of the library in later stages. It was found that the majority of EE, PL, and IH participants had positive attitudes toward collecting information resources in the first stage to be used in the later stages, particularly in terms of undertaking background reading. This is in line with the findings of Tahir et al. (2010), who found that humanities researchers regularly fulfil their IN by using the library and personal collections. Al-Daihani and Oppenheim (2008) found that personal collections were the most heavily used source for Kuwaiti legal researchers.

Library information services was another factor that affects the IU and IB of the graduate students. Promotion of the services was found to be an issue that affects the use of the library. It was found that the majority of the participants in this study lack awareness about the specific services offered by the library. The same point has been raised by Al-Muomen et al. (2012), who found that lack of awareness among graduate students about the specific services that libraries offer reduces their use of the library. The findings of this study revealed that ineffective library services publicity appeared to be another crucial factor affecting the use of the library across the studied disciplines. Some of the interviewees confirmed that their professors, rather than the library, had informed them about workshops to develop their information skills. Even those who admitted they attended the workshops provided by the library reflected that the available workshops were insufficient to meet their specific needs. Similarly, Al-Muomen et al. (2012) found that graduate students who attended library training sessions were often dissatisfied with the outcome and perceived the sessions as insufficient. Students' dependence on their personal efforts using trial and error to develop their information skills was confirmed by the majority of PL, IH, and EE participants across every stage of their research. Although KU libraries provide one-on-one training sessions at the request of students, most of the participants in those disciplines stressed that they usually depended on trial and error methods to develop their information skills. This is in accordance with both Vezzosi (2009) and Bhardwaj's (2012) findings that graduate students' own efforts are the most highly ranked way of learning how to use e-resources, while the librarians were ranked relatively low.

The majority of MC and IH participants found that they learned about library services through their master's programs modules, rather than through the library itself. This is consistent with Al-Muomen et al.'s (2012) finding that most graduate students at KU thought that the library offered inadequate information skills training, which affected their ability to use the EIRs effectively. However, no evidence was provided by EE and PL participants that they received this type of training through modules in their master's programs. This result indicates that information literacy training was implemented at KU at the departmental level, which had a positive influence on the students' use of the library. It seems that some

programs have not launched this course at the graduate level, such as the PL and EE programs.

External information sources were found to be another important factor associated with the use of the library by graduate students at KU. Non-university libraries were found to be used by most of the participants in this study to fulfil their topic-specific needs. The inability of KU libraries to meet the specific needs of graduate students across the studied disciplines acted as a barrier to their use of the library and forced them to find alternative libraries outside the university. The majority of PL, MC, and IH participants confirmed this, while a few EE participants indicated that they used external libraries. This might be because they rely on the internet to obtain journal articles from the authors' home pages and other available databases on the internet, or they may have personal subscriptions to professional databases, such as IEEE Xplore. In the context of this study, the result is partially contradicted by the finding of Vezzosi (2009) regarding life sciences graduate students, as these students greatly depended on their respective libraries to check for relevant information and did not use any other libraries. It is also partially consistent with the results of Otiye (1999) and Wu and Chen (2010) regarding humanities graduate students, who tend to use several other ways to obtain documents that are unavailable in their university libraries.

The role of academics in the context of KU higher education was found to be a substantial external factor that positively or negatively affected library use. It was found that the majority of the participants (PL, IH, EE, and MC) in this study acknowledged their dependence on their supervisor as a source of guidance and information more than the library throughout the research stages. For example, EE participants perceived the supervisor as the main source of information to be consulted before the library. MC students depended on the supervisor as a second source of information after the library. However, in IH and PL, the supervisor was perceived as a main source of support in terms of alerting students to the existence of relevant materials but did not often provide direct access to them. The results indicated that the role played by the supervisor as an external information source in the context of KU negatively affected the use of the library by the graduate students. Participants across the studied disciplines sought specialist advice or help to find information resources related to their specific topics. They noted that

they not only sought their supervisor's support but also that of specialists in their field. This is in accordance with many researchers, such as Otike (1999), Tahir et al. (2010), and Satish-Kumar et al. (2011), who have all emphasized that consulting experts in a researcher's subject area is a graduate student's preferred method for gathering information, followed by conversations with colleagues. It was found that experts in the field were a very significant external factor that negatively affected the use of the library.

Financial adequacy was found to be the main factor that affects the use of the library in the context of this study. The use of information resources was found to be associated with the ability to purchase such resources in the Kuwaiti context. Some students buy journal articles online because they cannot wait for ILL requests to be delivered by the library. The majority of PL and IH participants build personal book collections despite the availability of these books in their college library. It can be reasonably speculated that due to the high socio-economic culture of Kuwait, which results in higher wages for many public employees, the students are able to pay for resources whenever needed.

6. Conclusions

This paper provides an overview of the complete findings of the study as well as a comparison of the similarities and differences among disciplines. The cultural context of each discipline has an impact on shaping the IU and IB of graduate students, which in turn shapes their interaction with the library's resources and services. "Mutual dependence" and "task uncertainty" played central roles in shaping the degree of concentration and control over the research process and accessing resources. This, in turn, shaped the disciplinary differences in the IU and IB of the graduate students. Disciplinary differences in this study raise concerns for the library regarding the necessity of differentiating between the disciplines in terms of graduate students' IN, IU, and IB when designing services to support their research. Libraries can influence students IU and IB by reassessing their instructional programs and the provision of their resources and services to meet the graduate students' specific IN. They can take a lead by working with the academic staff to guide students through their research stages.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The Engineering Library should redesign its services to be more digitally based (e.g., subscribe to more centralized field-based databases and launch online ILL services) to fulfil the students' IN, as the culture of the electrical engineering field strongly influences students' preferences to access and use e-resources.
- As the microbiology field is interdisciplinary, the Science Library should provide a link to the Health Sciences Library or the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research Library through its website to provide the students with the resources needed at the university library to satisfy their IN. However, this recommendation is currently acted upon.
- The use of Arabic as a spoken language in the Islamic history field shapes the students' need to translate other foreign language resources to meet their IN. Therefore, the Arts Library should provide translation services for foreign language historical resources to support graduate students' research.
- The Arts Library should develop its historical Arabic book collection to include historical e-books to encourage Islamic history students to use IT.
- The Arts Library should establish links to archival institutions, such as museums, in the Islamic world to meet the Islamic history students' IN at the university libraries.
- As the public law students have professional IN, the Law Library should recruit a legal advisor as a library staff member to support the graduate students in their research. In addition, it could develop specific legal book collections to satisfy the students' IN.
- The Law Library should subscribe to other local databases that provide up-to-date legislation and decisions and that have direct links to the courts to fulfil the students' IN.
- The Law Library should establish links with governmental bodies by linking their legal departments with the library to meet the public law students' IN within the university libraries.

8. Further Research

Further research should be conducted to investigate the impact of the culture of other disciplines at KU on the IU and IB of graduate students. Further studies should be conducted to investigate the IU and IB of Ph.D. students at KU. Moreover, future studies should be conducted to investigate the IU and IB of graduate students at private universities in Kuwait.

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Appendix
The Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Part One: General Information*

- **Name** (optional).....
- **Department**.....
- **Academic year:** ☐ **First year** ☐ **Second year** ☐ **Third year**
☐ **Final year**
- **Gender:** ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**
- **Contact details**.....

Part Two: The Interview Questions

A. First stage master's students

Warm up questions

1. In your discipline, what is the academic requirement for completing your programme?
(Small project, dissertation, comprehensive exam, etc.)
Can you tell me what type of research project you decided to work on?

Questions

2. Tell me a little about the research in your subject area; how was it carried out?
Did you work alone or in a research group?
If you work in a group, please tell me how you carry out the research.
3. How did you decide which topic is suitable for your dissertation/project?
Please describe the processes you went through to define your topic.
4. Did you need to review the literature on your subject area for your dissertation/project?
If yes, please tell me how you conducted the literature search for your dissertation/project. (Please elaborate)
5. How did you decide which research methodology might be useful for your topic? (Please elaborate)

6. After you have designed your research methodology, how did you design your research instrument? (Please elaborate)
7. Please describe the help you might need when you search for information and from whom you might seek it.
8. Thinking back over your experience throughout this stage, do you feel that you might use the information differently than when you first started? (Please elaborate)

B. Mid-stage master's students

Warm up questions

1. Can you tell me what type of research methods you use for your dissertation?
(Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)

Questions

2. How did you decide that this research method could fit your research design? (Please elaborate)
3. What type of information did you need to help you when analysing your data? (Please give examples)
4. How did you find the information you needed for analysing your data? (Please elaborate)
5. Having analysed your data, did you need any information to help you understand what your results mean?
 If so, tell me why. (Please give examples)
 Did you need to compare your results with those of previous studies?
6. If so, please tell me how you searched for information to compare your results with the findings of previous researchers on the same topic. (Please elaborate)
7. What sort of information did you need when writing- up your dissertation? (Please give examples)
8. Thinking back over your experience of the last two years, do you feel that you used the information differently in the earlier stage of your study? (Please elaborate.)

C. Final stage master's students

Questions

1. After the research project is finished, how do you feel about your information searching habits? Are they different from the earlier stages of your research? (Please elaborate)

Did you need to use the library throughout the different stages of your study?

2. If so, please tell me what role was played by the library in supporting your research? (Please give examples)

3. Thinking back over your experiences of the last few years, do you feel that you used the information differently in the earlier stages of your study? (Please elaborate.)

Final Question

4. From your perspective, what should the academic library provide you with to support you effectively in your research?

Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experiences?

Thank you for your participation in this interview.

REVIEWS

Postrevolutionary Iran: A Political Handbook. By Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Kourosh Rahimkhani. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2018. Pp. 853 with index. \$69.95 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780815635741 (hardcover); 9780815654322 (Ebook).

Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Kourosh Rahimkhani's *Postrevolutionary Iran: A Political Handbook* is an immense and unprecedented undertaking to describe political institutions and the political elite in Iran. This work, unlike any other, will likely be considered an indispensable source for those studying Iranian politics since the Islamic Revolution. This work is a comprehensive collection of data on the political life of Iran since 1979. Much of the data compiled in this book can also be found on Mehrzad Boroujerdi's website Iran Data Portal (<http://irandataportal.syr.edu/>).

The book is comprised of two large sections. The first section of the book focuses on political institutions in Iran. The second section of the book focuses on the political elite within Iran. The work aims to address questions around elite studies, electoral behavior, gender and politics, party politics, and institutional design, and compares the pre- and post-revolutionary elite in Iran. Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani believe nuance and capturing the full scope of Iranian politics has been missing from postrevolutionary analysis. They do not aim to study the impact of the political elites but rather to gather data illuminating who the political elite are.

Using data from archives, yearbooks, books, obituary notices, newspapers, and online sources, Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani created a database of over 2,300 political personalities in Iran. In addition to collecting data on Iranian political players, the authors also collected data on "36 elections, 166 outlawed political organizations, 248 legal political parties, various ministerial impeachments, and women's political participation" (p. xx). The authors acknowledge that it is problematic to depend solely on Iranian government information that could be lacking in accuracy and objectivity, but they often had no other choice for data sources. The authors used various means to interview subjects listed in the book. Some interviews were

conducted with interlocutors, some were performed via Skype, some answers were received via email. The authors acknowledge that much of the data in this book is subject to change as more than half of their list of the political elite are living members of Iranian society.

The first section of the book is broken up into fourteen chapters relating to Iranian political institutions. The authors give a detailed chronicle of the major events in Iran from 1978 to 2017. They provide a yearly breakdown of political institutions formed. Almost every chapter has a short introduction describing the political institution before going into the detailed charts and graphs. This section ends with a lengthy description of political parties in Iran. Each party is described by using its name, date, and place of formation. They also list the party founding members, the party's political leaning, and a brief description of the organization.

The second section of the book is a list of "Who Is Who in Postrevolutionary Iran" (p. 351). The authors attempted to list the name, occupation (titles and years of service), years of birth and death, location of birth, education, father's name and profession, pre-elite occupation, pre-revolutionary prison experience, veteran of Iran-Iraq War status, member of Revolutionary Guard status, member of a martyr's family status, political party affiliation, and any important narrative about the member. They were unable to complete every facet for every member. However, the listing itself is impressive. The list makes up over half of the book.

This work is notable not only for its scope but also because the authors have made much of the data available to scholars through their website. This book is one of a kind and will be invaluable to those who study Iranian history and politics.

I recommend this book for libraries with Iranian studies scholars or for those who have scholars who study comparative political science. The book contains an amazing amount of charts, graphs, and illustrations that would be very useful for future research in this area. The book is well made and a hefty tome at almost 900 pages. The references will be useful to many but I believe their listing of all the websites they utilized will also be very informative to scholars. The index is very thorough.

I think this work will be instrumental to those who study Iranian history and politics. This immense undertaking is to be applauded for its depth and breadth. The companion website

(<http://irandataportal.syr.edu/>) will also be of great use to many in the field. I recommend this book for all research institutions with Iranian studies scholars.

JALEH FAZELIAN

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The Praiseworthy One: The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images. By Christiane Gruber. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018. Pp. x, 395, with bibliography and index. ISBN: 9780253025265 (cloth).

In light of recent controversies over figural representation of the Prophet Muhammad, Christiane Gruber's book provides a timely analysis of the history of both textual and pictorial depictions of the Prophet across Muslim cultures. Her purpose is not to delineate the historical Muhammad, but rather to understand him as the devotional heart of Muslim piety through his representation in Islam's rich literary and artistic heritage.

Chapters are arranged thematically, corresponding roughly to chronological periods, and focus primarily on Persianate and Turkish cultures. Beginning with the earliest known figural representation of the Prophet in the thirteenth century, Gruber demonstrates how depictions of him evolved with changing spiritual concerns and political realities. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an emphasis on the Prophet as an enthroned king reflected the long tradition of iconography of divine sovereignty in Persian visual arts and served to legitimize contemporary rulers. Alongside this image, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw the influence of Mongol culture, intense polemical debates, and the growing importance of Sufism transform the Prophet's biography into a heroic epic that emphasized miracles and featured an iconography drawn from Eastern Christian art.

The continuing involvement of Sufism led to depictions of mystical visions of the Prophet that drew on the *mi'rāj* and *majlis* motifs. Sectarian polemics were reflected in the choice of personages portrayed in these images, such as the first four caliphs or the founders of the *ṭarīqah*'s lineage. The Sufi concept of *nūr*

Muḥammad influenced the development of a more allegorical and abstract imagery, in which the Prophet's face was concealed by a veil to hide the brilliance of his light or was replaced by a flaming nimbus. Both sectarian polemics and the *nūr Muḥammad* came to the fore in depictions of the Prophet under the Safavids and the Ottomans. In Safavid art, the Prophet's son-in-law 'Ali was represented as sharing in the *nūr Muḥammad* and occasionally supplanted the Prophet, while under Ottoman influence, in addition to sectarian messaging, the appreciation for the Prophet's relics led to further abstraction in which depictions of relics served as substitutes for figural portrayals.

Gruber argues that although there have been varying levels of acceptance of pictorial representations of the Prophet throughout the history of Islam, the modern dominance of iconoclastic sensibilities in the Muslim world has resulted from the long development toward abstraction as well as the more recent ability to mass produce images. Even modern Iran, where versitic depictions influenced by nineteenth-century European art continued well into the twentieth century, is seeing a movement away from figural representation of the Prophet.

This is a well-made book, with images of manuscripts and other illustrations beautifully reproduced in color. The bibliography is extensive and reflective of the wide chronological and geographic range of material. Romanization forgoes diacritics, which is helpful to those readers not familiar with Arabic script. This book is best suited to an academic library, and while not geared towards specialists, basic knowledge of the Prophet's life and Muslim culture would be helpful in order to fully appreciate the analyses and conclusions.

DENISE SOUFI

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Unveiling Men: Modern Masculinities in Twentieth-Century Iran. Gender, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East. By Wendy DeSouza. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2019. Pp. xv, 190, with bibliographical references and index. ISBN: 9780815636038.

Wendy DeSouza is a lecturer in Iranian Studies in the Middle East/South Asia Program at the University of California, Davis. She received her M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago and her Ph.D. from UCLA in Modern Middle East History.

DeSouza addresses an important topic of gender and sexuality in Iran between the two world wars. She argues that although the political situation in Iran was going through a transition, the male identity was targeted and forced to change. She argues that the purpose of her book is to “examine subordinated masculinities, not simply to explain the rise of hegemonic masculinity” (p. 5). DeSouza believes that often the extent to which men were subjects of gender reforms had great impact on modern Iranian society.

The book, insightfully, is divided in three parts. Part one, Iranian transformation, includes three topics: photography and the erotics of power, unveiling men, and Sayyid Hasan Taqizadah and the making of bourgeois morality. Part two, transnational masculinities and sexualities, incorporates two topics: who is the lover, and love without lovers. The third section is the epilogue: queering Iranian masculinities.

Using a well-researched bibliography, DeSouza takes the challenge to describe how the Qajar king Nasir al-Din Shah (1831–1896) was using photography as a powerful tool for displaying female eroticism. In these photographs the king usually has a secondary role, and women have “asserted their presence” in a more prominent role. Nasir al-Din Shah’s portraits of court women show that women had visibility and power. Nasir al-Din Shah believed this was the key to a successful reign: a show of a balance of power with the image of the Shah sidelined by standing on the side while women occupy a central location. The images of women and the male beloved were connected with pleasure. Photographs of hunting expeditions were demonstrations of power: the idea of “razm va bazm” (fight and feast) (p. 27). However, the situation changed under the succeeding dynasty of Riza Shah Pahlavi (1925–1979). The role of women was marginalized; in place of Qajar-era

photographs of harems and women, the photographs during Riza Shah Pahlavi's reign were more about the modernization of military structures and technologies. This was a reaction to the perceived "semi-colonial status" of Iran during the last years of the Qajar dynasty.

DeSouza discusses in detail the unveiling of men in Iran which took place during the 1920s and 1930s. Iranian males were forced to change their traditional clothes to Western-style clothing and had to shave. They were humiliated in public by being forcefully "unveiled." This was a solution to the modernization of Iranian society implemented by Riza Shah Pahlavi. The great propaganda machine used the press to push for a policy for the united appearance of the population that began in 1928. The other policy was for a single dress code, an anti-tribal dress code. There was an intent to create a gender policy as an integral part of Riza Shah's government. Men "should be protectors of women" (p. 39). During this time women were sidelined and the image of a strong masculine male figure was promoted. Ethnicity and traditionalism were marginalized and state secularism enforced. Part of the unified appearance policy was the Persian language. It was promoted as the dominant and pure language of the country. Primary schools were ordered to chiefly teach Persian, opening the way for the disappearance of other languages from schools.

National decline was associated with "lower-class men, whose bodies had become corrupted through tradition and could not meet the urgent need of social regeneration" (p. 61). DeSouza notes that "the urgent needs of production and militarization intensified the policing of sexual dissidents and criminalized same-sex practices, and homosexuality was designated an affront to national duty" (p. 86). There was a great fear of a population decrease, as this would be dangerous for Riza Shah's ambitions to create a strong Persian nation and country. In Iranian society "the love of youth" was not unusual, although it was criticized. The author states that a lack of sexual restraint and not having a sexual preference was seen as the cause of unmanliness. The editor of the journal *Kavah*, Taqizadah, was essential in molding social opinion and practices in Iran. Sexuality was linked to survival of the Iranian race. For the Iranian male, reproduction should be the "patriotic duty" (p. 71). Taqizadah created a vision "of modern manhood in which male bodies were defined by their usefulness to industrial production and sexual

reproduction” (p. 77), which was the cure to Persia’s economic and demographic decline. Nevertheless, this view was not accepted by all and there were critics of these policies.

It is interesting that DeSouza only briefly glances at the geopolitical situation in the beginning of the twentieth century in the Middle East. Many countries in the Middle East were going through “modernization” and purification of nations. It would have been helpful to place Iran within the framework of these political and forced social changes.

DeSouza discusses the writings of Louis Massignon (1883–1962) in the context of sexuality and gender. The author shows “how gender and sexuality can mediate our understanding of the field of mysticism and vice versa” (p. 84). DeSouza thinks Massignon was a man in conflict with colonial models of masculinity and heteronormativity and he finds “transcendence through the intervention of Sufi saints” (p. 84). Massignon was homosexual, but he struggled with his sexuality and later in his life he denounce his sexual orientation. His writings molded the future teachings about pure societies.

The author articulates her objective for writing this book: “Queering these texts ultimately allows us to reframe masculinity as an unresolved yet urgent and multifaceted question of the early to mid-twentieth century” (p. 5) DeSouza’s book is an interesting and less-researched topic upon she has produced an extremely well-researched book with an ample amount of references that could be very useful for libraries, especially academic libraries that have Middle East-related collections. This book will be of particular interest to scholars in modern Iranian studies as well as gender studies specialists.

NORA AVETYAN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

GEORGE N. ATIYEH PRIZE WINNERS 2019

The George N. Atiyeh Award is an annual event to recognize aspiring Middle East subject specialist librarians. This year's committee received six applications, all of which were worthy of this prestigious award. We chose two exceptional applicants: Sadaf Ahmadbeigi and Deniz Özlem Çevik.

(1) Sadaf is currently enrolled at the University of British Columbia in the School of Library Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS) in Vancouver completing a dual degree in archival and library studies. Prior to commencing SLAIS she completed a B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and a previous B.A. in Persian literature and language at the Alzahra University in Tehran. She has a variety of library experience between public and academic libraries and currently is working at the Asian Library of UBC as a Mosaic program fellow.

(2) Deniz is currently enrolled at McGill University's School of Information Studies. Prior to commencing the SIS program, she completed an M.A. in History and Classical Studies at McGill and a B.A. in History at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. Both her B.A. and M.A. focused on Ottoman and Turkish history. Deniz has held a variety of research and library positions. Last summer she worked at the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and currently she works as a Special Assistant in the McGill Libraries and as a graduate research assistant on the Riddle Project, which aims to explore the relationship between riddles and food menus in 18th- and 19th-century English society.

Many congratulations, Sadaf and Deniz.

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

George Atiyeh Award Essay:

SADAF AHMADBEIGI

To write this essay, I looked back at the notes I took a year and a half ago at the 2019 Middle Eastern Librarians Association conference and an amalgamation of feelings and emotions took me by surprise. I remembered how professionally lonely and isolated I used to feel before that conference, thinking that maybe what I wanted to do with my degree wasn't that important. If it was important, then how come there wasn't even one Middle Eastern librarian at my school? How come we never talked about "right to left" scripts when creating MARC records? No one ever mentioned the possibility of attempting to develop digitization technologies such as an Arabic Optical Character Recognition. At that point I had finished a little more than a year of my classes and felt really confused about how to apply what I was learning to the field in which I was hoping to work. Attending this conference as one of the 2019 recipients of the George Atiyeh Prize, not only were all of these questions answered, but I also felt like I was part of a community who cared about the world of Middle Eastern knowledge creation, organization, and dissemination.

Attending this conference, however, was so much more than a chance for me to answer some questions about my career; it was a chance to connect with other Middle Eastern librarians. All across my notes are email addresses, phone numbers, and names of an incredibly kind and passionate group of librarians who were willing to share their knowledge and experiences with me. I knew I could rely on their help to navigate the complicated world of academic librarianship, and indeed I did. From Emily Witsell, I learned how to create a curriculum for MENA programs' information literacy as she spoke about her initiative and after her talk as she so kindly talked to me about that process and shared her slides with me. Through Magda El-Sherbini, I became familiar with a project for developing an open access Multilanguage Thesaurus to which I am very excited to contribute. I had, of course, heard about the many projects the Library of Congress spearheads, but seeing it in action through updates from AMED (African and Middle Eastern Division), the

cataloging division of ASME (Asian and Middle Eastern), and the Cairo and Islamabad Overseas Office of the acquisition program, was invaluable.

As a student in both library and archival programs at UBC, and as someone who is interested in preserving digital content, I found Ryder Kouba's session about web archiving and its importance very inspiring. Before his talk, I had only heard of the Wayback Machine for collecting and preserving content from the web. Especially in the 2019 political and social climate in which many of us were eagerly looking for ways to keep our governments accountable for their actions and promises, Kouba introduced us to many exciting tools to do so. After returning to my university in Vancouver, I looked more closely at memory creation and preservation on social media. When I heard from my professor in a preserving digital records class that a plan to preserve data should be set in place well *before* the depositing the records themselves, I was not surprised because of Kouba's talk.

As I think back about MELA's 2019 conference, the first professional conference I have ever attended, I can't help but feel nostalgic and incredibly privileged. This past year has been extremely difficult for many of us as the world is fighting a global pandemic, mostly in isolation. It seems like it was so long ago and in a faraway universe that I was able to attend this amazing conference and be present in a warm and energetic room at Loyola University, in beautiful New Orleans, where laughter was abundant, and in every corner was a friendly circle of librarians who welcomed me into their conversations. It was in that conference and through many meaningful interactions with other Middle Eastern librarians, some of whom were former Atiyeh Prize recipients themselves, that I felt like I belonged. Continuing to fight for a more just and inclusive world, I carry with me the feeling and knowledge that was so kindly shared with and bestowed upon me.

George Atiyeh Award Essay:

DENİZ O. ÇEVİK

While attending the 2019 Middle East Librarians Association annual meeting in New Orleans as one of the George N. Atiyeh Award winners, I did not know that it would be the last academic conference I would attend in person. Only three months after the meeting in November, a global pandemic hit the world and it completely changed the meaning of being “social.” For this reason, I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to meet with many inspiring information professionals and practicing librarians in person and to socialize with participants from different parts of the world. As a new graduate in Library and Information Science with a background in history and social sciences, I had already participated in various academic conferences. However, the MELA conference was a different experience in the sense that it is not simply an academic conference. It is rather a meeting where library and archives professionals specialized in the MENA region gather and talk about the practical side of our field. In this sense, the MELA conference was a unique experience that provided me with different perspectives on what it means to be a practicing librarian or archivist in the MENA field.

As I write this Atiyeh Award essay for the 2019 MELA conference, the global COVID-19 pandemic is still going on. Perhaps for the first time in a long while, the world really grasped the meaning of “global” as everyone experienced similar fears, anxieties, and hopes at the same time. Although the differences in social and economic levels between countries affected the ways they responded to this crisis, one thing was common: the uncertainty about the future. However, this uncertainty has turned into an opportunity as one thing was certain: the urgent need for going digital.

During the pandemic, digital services have become an absolute need for every organization. However, libraries and archives were aware of this need long before the pandemic. In this sense, it is not a coincidence that the 2019 MELA annual meeting opened its first day with a panel on digitization. During this panel, participants from

different institutions talked about their ongoing digitization projects for different library and archival material such as photographic heritage, manuscripts, and books. This panel focused on three aspects of digitization: digitization of graphic material, cataloguing of manuscripts and books, and crowdsourcing. Özge Calafato from the Akkasah Center for photography in Abu Dhabi presented a digital preservation project for Turkish and Ottoman photography collections. Calafato's talk touched upon an interesting aspect of working in the region: building and maintaining a culture for preservation of graphic material in the region. The second talk, by Peter Magierski and Kelly Tuttle, was on a cataloguing project and the methods to facilitate cataloguing and digitization of manuscripts from the catalogue of Columbia University Libraries. As a former history student specialized in Ottoman history, the third talk, by Joan Weeks (a subject librarian from the Library of Congress) on the Abdulhamid book collection, was of particular interest for me. Weeks explained in detail the full project life cycle starting from how the collection was acquired, through how it was catalogued, and finally to how the access was given to users. The topic of the last talk, by Amanda Steinberg and Gwen Collaço, was one of the emerging trends in library and archives: crowdsourcing. Two panelists focused on folksonomies to tag items that allow them to create metadata for the material. Although crowdsourcing and metadata creation through folksonomies are some of the topics we learn as information students at school, we often do not have the opportunity to see practical examples from the field. In this sense, the last talk of the digitization panel allowed me to understand the lessons learned from a project that used these new trends.

Looking at this panel from 2021 amidst the pandemic, I now have a better understanding of the importance of digitization, digital services, and open access for libraries and archives. Users and researchers of the MENA library and archives catalogues are located in different parts of the world and with limited travel possibilities due to the pandemic; metadata in online catalogues and open access to digitized material have become crucial for users to continue their research activities. The projects presented in the first panel show us the possibility for library and archives professionals and users to overcome the challenges of the pandemic. Although visiting a library or an archive in person is a totally different experience that is also part of the research itself, the absence of this possibility should not

prevent the researcher from benefitting from what libraries and archives offer to them.

Another topic that touched upon the importance of going digital for libraries and archives was web archiving. As an information professional with a particular interest in digital scholarship, I found the workshop on archiving the websites sponsored by the Digital Scholarship Interest Group very thought-provoking. During my studies in history, I used to think about what the discipline would look like 50 years from now with so many digital archival materials available, such as audio-visual records, emails, and, of course, websites! During the workshop, Ryder Kouba reminded us that websites were records that contain historical evidence and hence they should be archived. Kouba's talk provided us with an insightful discussion on the Internet Archive, tools to archive the web, description standards for web archiving, and ethical issues such as permissions and rights for the websites. While talking about the vulnerability of the web content, Kouba gave us a striking example from the region: the website of Mohamed Morsi. Morsi's website was once available, and researchers could benefit from it. However, the site is no longer live, and it has never been archived, meaning that we have lost this historical evidence. This possibility of information loss reminds us that we, as information professionals, are responsible not only for archiving the past for current researchers but also for archiving the present for future researchers.

Mohamed Hamed from the University of California, Berkeley, kicked off the first panel of the second day on liaison, outreach, and discovery. He presented the results of a survey sent to the area studies faculty members to understand how faculty members make use of the library resources. The methodology of this survey helped me understand the ways of conducting research on users in a library setting. Another interesting talk of the panel was Magda El-Sherbini's talk on the development of an open-access multilingual thesaurus. Her talk focused on one of the challenges of dealing with the material from the MENA field: matching English terms with their non-Roman language equivalents. El-Sherbini talked about the linked-data approach that could facilitate the creation of a multilingual thesaurus. The last talk of the panel, by Emily Witsell, was probably one of the most important talks of the entire meeting from a student's perspective. Witsell introduced the information literacy curriculum for students of the MENA program at Wofford

College. I found this talk particularly interesting because it highlighted the fact that information literacy should not be taken for granted and students often need guidance from the librarians to become familiar with the field. In this sense, the courses taken throughout the programs in Middle East studies should be supported by guidance from subject librarians. The second day at the MELA conference ended with a cataloguing workshop organized by the Committee on Cataloguing. The talk was entitled “New approaches in cataloguing” by Paul Frank, Manager of Cooperative and Policy Programs at the Library of Congress. Frank’s focus was on the emerging trends in the cataloguing community such as linked data, BIBFRAME, online access, and new ways to ensure authority control.

As a new library and information professional, I also enjoyed the vendors’ presentations. Vendors are important parts of librarianship and I have had the opportunity to meet some of them to discover their perspective on Middle East librarianship. I am also grateful to have had the opportunity to attend MESA, one of the most important academic conferences of the field. I attended several panels about Ottoman history, modern Middle East, and digital humanities. I also had the opportunity to meet with scholars whom I read during my studies for my undergraduate and master’s degrees in history and my old friends and colleagues whom I had not seen for a long time.

Both the MELA and MESA conferences gave me the opportunity to meet with inspiring librarians and important scholars of the MENA field. I would like to thank all the George N. Atiyeh Committee members—Sean Swanick, Heather Hughes, and Akram Habibulla—for choosing me as one of the recipients of the George N. Atiyeh Award and for giving me the opportunity to visit New Orleans, one of the most beautiful cities in the United States. It was a pleasure to meet the members of the MELA community and I look forward to participating in the next MELA meetings.

Annual Meeting 2019

**MELA Business Meeting
November 14, 2019
Loyola University
New Orleans, Louisiana**

MELA MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: MOHAMED ABDULLA, IMADELDIN ABUELGASIM, ADHAM ALOK, AICHA AZZAOU, NEDIM BALI, GUY BURAK, DALE CORREA, IMAN DAGHER, HIRAD DINAVARI, MAGDA EL-SHERBINI, MAHMUT FATIH PAÇA, DAVID FAUST, GEORGE FAWZY, GAIL FISCHER, MAGDA GAD, AKRAM HABIBULLA, BALSAM HADDAD, AMANDA HANNOOSH-STEINBERG, MOHAMED HAMED, MICHAEL HOPPER, WILLIAM KOPYCKI, CONNIE LAMB, PAULINE LEWIS, PETER MAGIERSKI, AMAL MORSY, LAILA MOUSTAFA, JUSTIN PARROTT, BENJAMIN RAHIMZADEH, MEHDI RAHIMZADEH, AJ ROBINSON, MATTHEW SABA, ANAÏS SALAMON, MARLIS SALEH, MUHANNAD SALHI, DEBORAH SCHLEIN, RACHEL SIMON, SHARON SMITH, DENISE SOUFI, SEAN SWANICK, JOAN WEEKS, EMILY WITSELL

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1: 00 p.m., and the traditional roll-call of everyone introducing themselves took place. Because the final draft of the 2018 minutes was not immediately circulated prior to the meeting due to a technical issue, those present voted to have them circulated and approved by e-voting. **Action Item: Secretary to work with Exec on e-voting to approve.**

OFFICER REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DALE CORREA):

Dale reported that last year's meeting focused on the state of the profession and some of the tools and innovations that were being developed. Since the meeting, the Executive Board wrote letters in support of SOAS colleagues who were losing their jobs as a result of changes taking place there. Despite the outpouring of letters from all over the world in solidarity with SOAS, the planned changes still

took place and resulted in the loss of many staff there; this was at a time when there needs to be more specialists working in the field to better serve researchers and students. Other activities of MELA over the past year included William Kopycki's Financial Affairs Working Group, and Mohamed Hamed's MELA Metrics Working Group. MELA should take a look at other professional library and academic organizations and make MELA a voice that can be heard in support. She suggested that such activity could take place through the MELA Social Media Committee, or otherwise addressed in the Bylaws Committee.

VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROGRAM CHAIR'S REPORT (LAILA MOUSTAFA):

Laila thanked Guy Burak and Sean Swanick for their help in planning the meeting and program, and asked program presenters to prepare any written presentation papers in case they can be published. She asked for feedback from attendees so as to make the 2020 meeting a success.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT (WILLIAM KOPYCKI):

The goal for this year will be to transcribe and distribute the 2019 minutes by December 2019; in this way topics will still be fresh in everyone's minds and action items taken. If it is possible to have the 2019 minutes approved and published in the next issue of *MELA Notes*, this will make everything official and keep us on-task. There were no complications with registrations this year. There are still minor issues that happen when someone (usually an admin person) registers on behalf of someone else where it can be hard to determine who is actually registered. William reported that the Financial Working Group discussed a number of matters earlier in the year. The official MELA 2019 receipt is available for anyone who needs this. This topic will be dealt with under New Business (below). Finally, William thanked this year's sponsors for stepping up and showing terrific support for this year's meeting.

MELA NOTES EDITOR'S REPORT (MARLIS SALEH):

During the year 2019–20, one annual issue of *MELA Notes*, number 92 (2019), 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>. All book reviews that will be published in the 2019 issue have already

been posted online in the blog, the MELA Notepad. All reviews are 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 91, 2018) 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 \$3,992.74 this past year, including 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 91 (2018) have been transmitted to them. 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. As always, Marlis continued to urge the membership to submit articles and to encourage colleagues to do so.

MELANET-L LISTSERV MANAGER'S REPORT (EVYN KROPF):

Evyn reminded everyone 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. The list conditions/guidelines for posting are available online for review, on the MELA website under the About MELA >> Communications >> MELANET-L Email List tab.

All are welcome to subscribe and may contact the list manager via email (listowner@mela.us), via the form on the MELA website, or via Google Groups. There are currently 561 subscribed email addresses (some members are subscribed under multiple addresses). The list manager has added roughly 38 new subscribers since last year's MELA meeting. A few colleagues that have moved on to other fields, retired, etc., requested to be unsubscribed from the list.

As required, a periodic reminder of the list conditions/guidelines for posting was sent by the list manager this year. All are reminded that MELANET continues to be archived within Google Groups.

Colleagues are also reminded of the Google Group for the Middle East Book Vendors List, formerly hosted at Stanford by our now retired colleague John Eilts, but now managed by our List

Manager. There are now 87 subscribed email addresses. This list is mentioned to new subscribers of MELANET-L and also under a note on the MELA website under the About MELA >> Communications >> MELANET-L Email List tab. Colleagues are reminded that this list is for the exchange of information about the vendors of library materials from the countries of the Middle East. Vendors are not permitted to subscribe to the list so that open discussion may take place. Members are also asked not to forward any list postings.

WEBMASTER'S REPORT (JUSTIN PARROTT):

Justin reported we now have cloud-based storage that enables MELA to store files in a safe, shared location. He added that this past year, MELA purchased the G-Suite for three users: President, Secretary, and Webmaster. The important part is that files can be shared and the email interface is a great improvement over the previous system. Most importantly, it adds an extra layer of security, especially since MELA officers have been targets of phishing attacks. He asked that anyone receiving unusual-sounding messages appearing to be from MELA officers asking for money to please report them to him. Using G-Mail Suite will also enable the handoff with new officers to be much easier than before. He also reported that he used a new plug-in to help facilitate registration and make the payment seamless. He will be working with William on further enhancements for the following year. MELA has received hundreds of views from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, India, and China. We've had 22,000 views over the past year (an increase of 5,000 from the previous year); for the MELA Facebook Page we have 2,700 followers, an increase of 500, and the average reach of 250 views per post. Noting that Facebook has "pay to play" in terms of reaching followers, even though MELA does not pay Facebook we still seem to be reaching our targeted audience as evidenced by the statistics and "organic views." On the Twitter front, we had 400 followers last year and now have 1,200. Justin thanked Gayle Fischer and AJ Robinson for tweeting the meeting this year. The next big step for the website is to work with Mohamed Hamed and his metrics committee to get results posted on our website. He also asked committee chairs to send him any updates to the membership of their committee, and also asked presenters to send copies of their presentations if they would like to see them posted on the website. He also asked for suggestions for content to be posted on the social media channels that are relevant to

Middle East librarianship. Finally, he thanked the members of the Social Media Committee, Nora Avetyan, Joan Weeks, Gayle Fischer, and AJ Robinson for their help this year.

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR'S REPORT (RACHEL SIMON):

Rachel said MELA received 15–20 books over the past year needing reviews. She reminded everyone that writing these reviews are a great way for new members to make themselves known as well as enriching their own libraries. She sends guidelines out with every book sent out to a reviewer, and is happy to spend additional time to answer any questions that new reviewers might have.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMITTEE ON CATALOGING (AMAL MORSY): The Committee consists of Evyn Kropf (University of Michigan); Asuman Tezcan (Stanford University); Iman Khamis (Northwestern University); and Pavel Angelos (Princeton University). This year there is a new liaison representing the ALA Committee on Cataloging: Asian and African Materials (CC:AAM), Denise Soufi from the University of North Carolina, while Amal Morsy will be the representative for the Library of Congress. During 2019, the Committee on Cataloging met and addressed many issues, including BIBFRAME, with linked data and metadata management issues continuing to be the most important subjects of discussion. New subject headings and classifications relevant to the Middle East have been posted on the committee's page on the MELA website. The committee meets virtually three times a year using Zoom. During these meetings, they discussed organizing two workshops for the 2019 MELA Annual Meeting. This will include: "A Cataloger's Path: Navigating PCC," given by Jessalyn Zoom, Chief of the Asian and Middle Eastern Division at the Library of Congress; and "New approaches in cataloging," given by Paul Frank, manager of Cooperative and Policy Programs at the Library of Congress. The Committee has two openings for two active committee members for the period 2020–2022. Committee members must be able to attend and participate in the virtual meetings and activities of the committee. All qualified librarians should apply. The voting will start by the second week of December.

DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP INTEREST GROUP: The MELA Digital Scholarship Interest Group (DSIG) Steering Committee was constituted in November 2018 to lead the work of the MELA Digital Scholarship Interest Group (DSIG) and is currently comprised of Evyn Kropf (chair), Heather Hughes, Guy Burak, Ryder Kouba, AJ Robinson, and Sean Swanick. Current members will serve until fall 2020. The Steering Committee circulates opportunities for training and community building; news of projects and initiatives; features of tools and approaches; and other topics of interest on the MELA community listservs. It maintains a resources page accessed via the MELA website. It intends to organize at least one roundtable, workshop, or presentation per year in conjunction with the annual MELA meeting. It may organize or sponsor additional programs occasionally at other times of year in conjunction with MELCom, MESA, or other conferences, prioritizing involvement of colleagues beyond North America and especially those colleagues based in MENA. The steering committee supports the work of Interest Group initiatives such as the MELA Digital Preservation Task Force. In accordance with its charge, this year the group has held three virtual meetings to formulate work plans for 2018–2020 and to discuss and carry forward their work. It has established the MELA DSIG listserv/discussion list (open to all members of the Interest Group and currently managed by the chair, who also happens to be MELA Listserv Manager) and set up a monthly rotation among steering committee members for shepherding the list—preparing and sending a monthly digest, and keeping the list active with postings for that month. It also established the steering committee web presence for the MELA site. The group created and began regular updates for a digital scholarship Resource List posted to the DSIG page on the MELA website (overseen by steering committee member AJ Robinson). It also prepared a report of the fall 2018 roundtable “Middle East Librarians in Digital Scholarship” published in the latest issue of *MELA Notes* [Number 91 (2018)] and circulated it on MELA lists. Any interested colleagues who missed the roundtable are encouraged to review the report. The group also planned a workshop/presentation for MELA 2019 offered by steering committee member Ryder Kouba on web archiving.

The interest group arranged for closer collaboration/partnership between MELA and the OpenITI Arabic-script OCR Project (OpenITI AOCP). Guy Burak is now on the project team as MELA

representative (“Library Lead”), while Dale Correa will serve as a second representative on the project’s “senior advisors list.” The DSIG steering committee + Dale will serve as the MELA advisory group which will handle documentation/reporting to the executive board and/or general membership. Other MELA colleagues may rotate into these roles before the conclusion of the project. They are still waiting to hear on expectations in practice (how frequently reps will join project meetings, etc.) but plans are already in place for the rep to attend in-person project meetings in January 2020. In addition, one of the steering committee members (Heather Hughes) presented on the topic of Middle East Librarians and Digital Scholarship at MELCom 2019 in Naples. In the future, the DSIG is hoping to organize a Wikipedia Edit-a-thon and a session dedicated to the topic of Arabic script OCR for the next MELA meeting in 2020.

EDUCATION AND MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE (CONNIE LAMB): Committee members this past year: Connie Lamb, Chair (Brigham Young University); Mariette Atallah Abdel-Hay (American University of Beirut); Heather Hughes (University of California, Santa Barbara); Anaïs Salamon (McGill University); Amanda Hannoosh-Steinberg (Harvard University); Patrick Visel (Ohio State University). Patrick retired in August, so the committee is looking for new member(s). Justin Parrot updated the Committee webpage. Three members of the committee gave presentations at the 2019 annual meeting. Anaïs continues as coordinator of the mentoring program. She conducted a survey of mentors and mentees and talked about the results in her presentation. This may result in some adjustments to the program. The Simmons College course on Middle East Librarianship that MELA members taught in Fall 2015 was suspended. Connie contacted the new director of the School of Library and Information Science about doing it again. She said that they would like to wait until a recently hired person, Sumayya Ahmed, who has a background in the Middle East, begins her work there next summer. The Committee will keep in touch with them about offering the course again.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (MATT SABA): The MELA nominating committee consisted of Matt Saba (chair), AJ Robinson, and Amanda Hannoosh-Steinberg. Matt gave special thanks to AJ for running the ballot and to Amanda for managing issues with missed ballots during

the voting process. This year, there were five positions open for nominations: Vice President/President Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, *MELA Notes* Editor, MELA Listserv Manager, and Member-at-Large. There was a 75 per cent response rate on ballots sent. The results of the election were as follows: Vice President/President-Elect: Robin Dougherty; Secretary/Treasurer: William Kopycki; *MELA Notes* Editor: Marlis Saleh; MELA Listserv Manager: Evyn Kropf; Member-at-Large: Iman Dagher.

NEW BUSINESS

MELA FINANCIAL WORKING GROUP: William Kopycki (chair) presented the report of the working group, which was convened and charged during the 2018 meeting in San Antonio. Its members included Betsy Baldwin, Robin Dougherty, and Sharon Smith. William went through the main points of the report and its recommendations, which were discussed and voted on by members. Akram asked if we could defer voting online; someone else asked if there was anything in the bylaws that requires a certain number of members. Dale answered that discussion and voting at the meeting was preferable to online voting, and that the bylaws call for a simple majority of members present at the MELA meeting.

1. Dues should be increased by \$20/year for a total of \$50.00/year.

Justification: MELA's dues have remained static at \$30.00 for the past 19 years. Other area-studies librarian associations have mandatory membership requirements with an affiliated/parent area studies academic association (annual dues ranging from \$35–\$200/year) or else do not operate on the same scale that MELA does. With an average of 70–80 dues paying members + institutional subscriptions (billed at the same rate as membership), MELA would have an additional \$1,400–\$1,600 of income with this change. This would not take effect until November 2020.

Discussion: Rachel Simon mentioned the Association of Jewish Studies Libraries, and that they have several incentives for members, such as access to their journal online which is otherwise embargoed for non-members; reduced registration rates; etc. William replied that in the 1970s and 1980s there were two different levels of

membership: associate and full. A motion was made and seconded to approve; placed to the vote by members, the increase was approved.

2. Annual Meeting registration fee should be at a minimum \$100.

Justification: Out of the last four annual meetings, three of them have had costs over \$10,000 per meeting, yet we charged only \$50.00 for registration. The one meeting that was low in cost (ca. \$3,000) was due to the existence of a host institution who truly covered the costs that would have otherwise been paid to a hotel. While the historic practice of MELA has been to keep costs low for attendees, the reality is that there are fewer and fewer institutions willing to host, so when we have the opportunity to have a host, MELA should still keep the registration amount higher in order to make up the difference in years when we do not have a host.

Average meeting attendance since 2012–2018 has been 65. By having a minimum registration fee of \$100, MELA can be assured of around \$6,500 as a starting budget for the following year's meeting. In other words, the revenue earned from the current year should be looked at as a starting budget baseline for the following year's meeting.

Discussion: Magda el-Sherbini suggested that lunch be cut from the meeting if that was too much of an expense. William replied that MELA has bundled lunch on the day of the meeting in order to retain members. For example, when lunch is not served (as seen on this particular day) and the business meeting is scheduled right after lunch, the end result is that very few members were present at the start of the business meeting. When there is a promise of food (light breakfast or lunch) we can expect members to be present on-time.

William asked for feedback on the suggestion that the MELA meeting should be shorter than the current two-and-a-half days. Iman Dagher said that institutions are getting reluctant to fund several days, and suggested that the meeting be reduced to two days. Another member proposed having the first day for presentations, and the second day for the business meeting in the morning, vendor showcase in the afternoon, while the committee meetings could take place throughout. Another member (Heather Hughes) noted that some libraries will only support attendance if the person is giving a presentation, and anything that may limit these opportunities will be

detrimental. Guy Burak suggested having a track-based meeting where there would be simultaneous sessions taking place; this might help reduce the open time needed. Another member suggested a virtual workshop which could be held at any time of the year. Someone else asked if the vendor showcase could be held as an exhibit instead, or else have it at the start of the MELA meeting/the night before. William replied that all this would depend on the feelings of the vendor community to staff a booth throughout the time of the meeting; also would this not distract from the presentation and other activities? William also explained that vendor showcase grew out of the “OCLC Breakfast” held in the mid-2000s, as well as an East View-sponsored dinner also held around that same time for the MELA community. Anything is possible, but it also depends on the vision of the new executive board and the VP/program chair for 2020. Akram said that for those staying on to attend MESA, having to stay an extra day to make it six days total is very difficult.

In light of the proceeding discussion, William motioned to table this particular point (mandatory minimum dues of \$100) for the time being. This was approved.

3. The Atiyeh Prize needs its own funding/sustainability, or else we should stop awarding it.

Justification: The Wilkins Award and Partington Awards have sponsorship and regular sources of funds. The Atiyeh Award does not. The Atiyeh Prize is currently \$400, plus a waiver of registration (\$50–\$70), MELA dinner (avg. \$50–60), and MESA registration (\$120 for the MESA student rate; if not students the cost can be as high as \$200). Total cost to MELA: \$630–\$730 per awardee. We have had several years with multiple winners; see: <https://www.mela.us/annual-conference/awards/george-atiyeh-prize/> This award needs to fundraise/find sponsors/solicit donations or else we should pause the award until funds are available.

Discussion: AJ Robinson said there is benefit to having multiple recipients, but at the same time, if one person could receive a higher amount it would be better. Dale asked other recent winners what they thought would be a suitable amount. One replied that MELA’s prize is actually better than other area studies association travel grants which are usually no more than \$250. She suggested that not making

MESA attendance obligatory would also save the recipient (and the association) money since there would be no need to stay for the remaining days of MESA (i.e., only 3 nights needed instead of 8). Dale suggested a mid-year call for contributions towards the Atiyeh Prize. Joan Weeks mentioned that ALA has this in their membership form. William replied that MELA registration has included the option to contribute towards the Atiyeh Prize for the past couple of years. It was suggested that instead of making this a fixed \$50 it could perhaps be left open so that contributors could give what they could, since \$50 might be a lot.

Dale proposed a fundraising working group, and asked for someone to chair. There were no willing volunteers, so it was proposed to move this to an online discussion.

There being no further discussion, this portion of the meeting closed and the meeting moved to announcements.

Rachel Simon (Princeton) mentioned that the Head of Middle East Collection position there is still open, and anyone having questions about the position should contact her.

Jacob Hill (Stanford) mentioned that the Digital Library of the Middle East has a lot of activity taking place behind the scenes, with a new interface and mapping expected to take place during the first quarter of 2020. Those interested in partnering with the DLME or suggesting collections to be included should contact him.

Sean Swanick (Duke) mentioned that he, along with Guy Burak (NYU), Robin Dougherty (Yale), and Peter Magierski (Columbia) are implementing a project to harvest websites from Turkish independent news sources. Other institutions are encouraged to contribute. He also added that there will be a meeting of Ivy+ member libraries to take place following the Vendor Showcase.

MELA METRICS PRESENTATION: Mohamed Hamed (Berkeley, chair) gave a formal update on the MELA Metrics Committee. The goals of the group are to build a MELA metrics portal for statistics, replicating that of the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL); collect and facilitate access to statistics for materials in Middle Eastern languages; share expertise and promote publishing about MELA metrics, focusing on local usage or MELA collective work in general; and build a MELA standard or guideline for the usage of Middle Eastern materials and specify a MELA metrics benchmark

based on the group's collective work. He introduced Michael Hopper, who discussed the proposed statistical database, which would be a modification of the CEAL web-based software that enables librarians to input their relevant statistics (acquisitions for all formats, cataloging production, etc.) which in the end would be viewable and comparable. A mock-up of the proposed software was created by Hisham Makki (independent contractor librarian formerly from LOC-Cairo), noting that a lot of development has to be done before the final product is ready. Ultimately this would be a centralized clearinghouse for MELA statistical data, but the CEAL software needs to be fully modified before it can be used by MELA.

Mohamed introduced Denise Soufi (UNC) who talked about the proposed OCLC data analytics portion of the project, which intends to examine library holdings for Middle East materials in the WorldCat database. The proposed languages include Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew, Kurdish, Persian, and Turkish, with additional languages added or aggregated together. Countries include 22 Arab countries, Armenia, Iran, Israel, and Turkey, with the possibility of more countries to be added, while formats include monographs (print and electronic), serials, and films. The committee has requested several sets of data from OCLC, namely North American holdings by language, Number of records by primary language and format, and Number of records by country of publication and primary language, in total as well as broken down by format. This data is broken down by publication year for 2000–2018, using ISBN matching in order to more closely achieve a count of titles rather than a count of OCLC records. The data for the years 1999 and earlier will be collected as a statistical total without the use of ISBN matching.

Sean Swanick presented the committee's idea to collect vendor data which would then form another component of the statistical database. The committee sent out spreadsheets to collect vendor data; among those who reported back included: Leila Books: books: 6,044, serials: 693; all in Arabic. As for Libra Kitap numbers: they reported for books: 67,135 in Turkish, Arabic, English, German, Kurdish, and Armenian, with serials at 3,704 in Turkish and English. Iranfarhang reported that for books: 95,049 titles in Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish, and English, and serials: 2143 in Persian, English, Arabic, and Kurdish. Weinberg reported that for 2018, the number of Hebrew titles included books: 4,693, maps: 1;

sound recordings: 139; scores: 4; serials: 27; and video recordings: 67.

Mohamed then continued the discussion, indicating that the CEAL software requires extensive modification to adapt it for MELA purposes, and this requires funding. According to CEAL contacts, it would take 300 hours to do this; the discussion continued to come up with estimate costs. William thought it would be best to have the committee create a Statement of Work for the project that would be run through the executive committee and solicited until at least three offers are received. This is similar to what was done with MELA's website renovation project a few years ago. As for the OCLC project, Mohamed said that there is no cost to do this; it just requires an agreement signed by the president of MELA. There being no objections, Dale moved to proceed and start the OCLC project; those present approved.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William Kopycki
Secretary-Treasurer

**Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2019
(November 10, 2018–November 9, 2019)**

INCOME

Dues, subscriptions	\$2,419.00
JSTOR royalties from <i>MELA Notes</i>	3,992.24
2018 (remainder) and 2019 meeting registration	6,169.95
2018 (remainder) and 2019 MELA dinner	2,308.22
2018 (remainder) and 2019 meeting sponsorships	7,340.00
Mailing list rental (1 list)	97.50
Bank interest	2.73
Wilkins Fund contribution	397.50
Atiyeh Award contributions	97.80
Ad in <i>MELA Notes</i>	195.30
TOTAL INCOME	\$23,020.24

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EXPENSES

MELA 2018 meeting expenses (remainder)	\$205.89
MELA 2019 meeting expenses	1,845.89
Vendor Showcase breakfast 2018	2,354.44
2018 Atiyeh Awards	950.00
2018 MELA Dinner	1,492.20
<i>MELA Notes</i> #91 printing and mailing	1,256.48
PayPal transfer fee	10.00
Partington Award cash	100.00
Wilkins Award cash	1,000.00
Web hosting expenses	484.80
Photocopying	42.46
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$9,742.16

PNC Bank Checking account balance as of November 9, 2019	\$15,120.89
PNC Bank Savings account balance as of November 9, 2019	5,449.69
PayPal account balance as of November 9, 2019	30,697.52
TOTAL	\$51,268.10
Wilkins Fund to date (included in account totals above)	\$13,442.94

As of November 9, 2019 MELA had 69 members paid up through 2019. 60 members are paid through 2020. 12 new names were added to the database since November 10, 2018. Total membership count at the time of the 2019 meeting is 89. There were 8 library subscriptions to *MELA Notes*.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Kopycki
Secretary-Treasurer