The Middle East Librarians Association 2022 Conference Program

MELA 50th Anniversary:

Learning from the Past and Looking Towards the Future

The location:

Online via Zoom, and in-person at Room 510 at the Engineering and Computer Science Building, University of Denver

Date:

November 29 to December 1, 2022

Committee members:

Heather Hughes (University of Pennsylvania), Leili Seifi (University of Birjand), Mohamed Hamed (University of California), William J. Kopycki (Library of Congress). With special thanks to Anais Salamon, Farshad Sonboldel, Robin Dougherty, and Salma Abumeeiz.
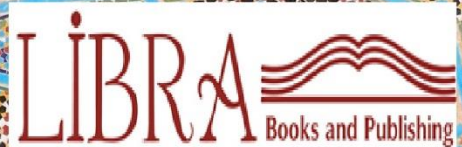
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The Middle East Librarians Association 2022 Conference Program

Conference Theme

MELA 50th Anniversary: Learning from the Past and Looking Towards the Future

Since 1972, when MELA was officially formed, the Middle East Librarians community has been working systematically to build its community, develop collections, preserve and enhance access to resources, and provide research and teaching support to users in the field. Through these 50 years, and even before, a lot of distinguished librarians paved the road through many ideas for projects and made achievements in MELA's history, which greatly impacted the present and will continue to shape MELA's future.

In 1974, MELA members discussed the main top ideas for cooperative acquisitions and bibliographic control, then in 1979 and later, members looked at using new technologies for related projects and resources such as cataloging computerization and the Middle East Microform Project. In the second millennium, the MELA community utilized the new tools and technologies to preserve and enhance access to the Middle East resources through numerous web archiving, digital humanities, and open access projects.

With social and political changes in the world and in the Middle East in particular, the MELA community worked together to secure access to resources in the area such as the Committee on Iraq, Endangered Archives, Archiving Arab Spring, and lately significant work done on the issues of social and racial justice and the pandemic's impact.

Through the last 50 years, MELA as an association has grown in various directions including a bigger and stronger community in all subfields of the Middle East librarianship, numerous projects, and affiliations and collaborations with other organizations and associations.

The conference this year reflects on MELA's accomplishments in the last 50 years, and look forward to ways to invest for the future. The Conference will be a chance for the MELA community to celebrate the history of the association, but also to discuss topics which should shape MELA's future. Presentations about the following topics or related to the general theme of the conference are considered:

- The Middle East Librarianship Profession: History and Future in the Contexts of Area Studies Librarianship
- The Profession and World Issues: Wars and Conflicts, the Pandemic, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) and More
- The Digital Transformation in the Middle East: Planning for the Future
- National and International Collaboration for Middle Eastern Collections and Services
- Cataloging and Technical Services: Developments and Projects for a Better Discovery
- Publishing in the Middle East: New Trends, Issues, Solutions, and the Role of Vendors

Conference Committee Members:

Heather Hughes, Leili Seifi, Mohamed Hamed, and William Kopycki. With a special Thanks to Anais Salamon, Salma Abumeeiz, Farshad Sonboldel, and Hisham Makki.

The Middle East Librarians Association 2022 Conference Program

Short program

(*) In person presentation   (**) Online presentation

Time	Duration	Paper or panel title	Presenter(s)
Tuesday: November 29, 2022 (All times are in Denver time Zone – Mountain Daylight Time)			
8:00-8:30	30 MIN	Registration	
8:30-8:45	15 MIN	*Welcome for MELA 50th Anniversary conference	Anais Salamon - MELA president
8:45-9:15	30 MIN	*Opening Remarks -- MELA, its early history and impact on my activities	Fawzi Abdulrazak – MELA founding member, and the Founder of Dar al-Mahjar Inc.
9:15-9:30	Break		
9:30-10:30	60 MIN	**Panel 1** * The Arabic Union Catalog: An international project for the collaborative cataloging of Arab libraries in the Middle East.	Sameh Nour Ahmed Mahfouz – Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal Univ
		**Developing an Integrated system for Purchasing Library Resources Lib-Hub: A Case Example from Iran	Roya Moradi & Mohammadreza Niazmand - – Isfahan University
		**Dictionaries Are Also Dying?	Harun Tuncer - Medipol University
10:30-11:15	45 MIN	Library of Congress reports	**Hong ta-Moore, *William Kopycki and *Fehl M. Cannon – Library of Congress
11:15-11:30	Break		
11:30-12:00	30 MIN	*The Digital Library of the Middle East	Jacob Hill – DLME – Stanford University
12:00-1:00	60 MIN	Lunch & Discussion with DLME	DLME sponsored
1:00-2:15	75 MIN	**Panel 2** **Documenting and Digitizing Bedouin Culture: The Clinton Bailey Archive	Samuel Thrope - National Lib. Of Israel
		*An Innovative Approach in the Creation of Human Libraries in the Middle East and North Africa	Dr. Mohamed Abdulla & Ms. Elvira A. Zingapan - Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University
		**Studying minorities: libraries beyond their boundaries	Yunus Abakay - The University of Exeter

		**The "KOHD-Digital" and "Qalamos" Portals – Current Developments in Manuscript Cataloging in Germany	Christoph Rauch - Berlin State Library
2:15-2:30	Break		
2:30-3:45	75 MIN	**Panel 3** *From catalog cards to the cloud: Transforming the Near East Collections for Discovery and Access.	Joan S. Weeks, Huda Dayton, Hirad Dinavari, Khatchig Mouradian, Muhannad Salhi – Library of Congress
3:45-4:00	Break		
4:00-4:30	30 MIN	**Panel 4** Light Shone on a Hidden Collection: A Collaborative Project to Catalog Yale's Turkish MSS	* Roberta L. Dougherty, Agnieszka Rec and Ayşe Çiçek Unal - Yale University **Özgen Felek - Yale University
4:30-5:15	45 MIN	* The Genesis of MELA : The History of the Middle East Librarian Association Through the MELA Notes Archive + MELA Network project	Farshad Sonboldel – University of California Santa Barbara
6:00		No-host dinner at Jerusalem Restaurant (http://www.jerusalemrestaurant.com/)	
Wednesday: November 30, 2022 (All times are in Denver time Zone – Mountain Daylight Time)			
8:30-9:45	75 MIN	**Panel 5** Linked data & BIBFRAME implementations : cataloging editors, with Arabic cataloging examples	**Committee on Cataloging** *Magda Gad-Stanford University and Amal Morsy-Library of Congress, and moderator Iman Dagher - UCLA. **Nancy Lorimer- Stanford University and Paul Frank-Library of Congress
9:45-10:00	Break		
10:00-11:00	60 MIN	**Panel 6** **A Reflective Roundtable on the Current state of Research Libraries and MENA Librarianship: Trends, Challenges, and Collectives	**Education Committee** Salma Abumeeiz – UCLA – Moderator. Sarah DeMott - Harvard, Heather Hughes – Penn Libraries – University of Michigan, and AJ Robison – Washington University.
11:00-12:00	60 MIN	**Panel 7** Publishing and Bookselling in Contemporary Cairo	*Roberta L. Dougherty **Yasmine El Dorghamy - RAWI **Trevor Naylor - AUC Press **Marcia Lynx Qualey - ArabLit Quarterly **Nadia Wassef, Diwan Bookshop
12:00-1:00		Lunch & Virtual Social	MELA sponsored
1:00-2:15	75 MIN	**Panel 8** **Digital Scholarship Interest Group Workshop: Introduction to Arabic OCR	**Digital Scholarship Interest Group** Jonathan Parkes Allen, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland)

			Dale Correa – University of Texas at Austin - moderator
2:15-3:00	45 MIN	**Panel 9** Middle Eastern Studies and Cooperative Collection Development	**MECDI** *Sean Swanick - Duke University **David Faust - University of Minnesota, Evyn Kropf - University of Michigan, Guy Burak - New York University, Deborah Schlein - Princeton University, Rustin Zarkar - University of North Carolina, Luo Zhou - Duke University and Mary Rader - University of Texas at Austin
3:00-3:15	Break		
3:15-4:30	75 MIN	MELA business meeting	Anais Salamon
4:30-5:30	60 MIN	Committee Meetings	
Thursday: December 1, 2022 (All times are in Denver time Zone – Mountain Daylight Time)			
8:30-9:30	60 MIN	**Panel 10**	
		Digital transformation for archival documents	*Maryam AlMutawa - Qatar National Library
		How the American University of Beirut and British Library joined efforts to save the Issa Iskandar Ma'luf Manuscript Collection	**Samar Mikati, Elie Kahale and Basma Chebaneh - AUB Libraries
		Enhancing access to digital collections through computational tools	**Mark Muehlhaeusler, Andrew and Mina - AUC Libraries
9:30-9:45	Break		
9:45-11:00	75 MIN		*Vendor showcase 1
11:00-11:15	Break		
11:15-12-30	75 MIN		**Vendor showcase 2
12:30-12:40	10	Conference Adjourned	Anais Salamon - MELA President

The Middle East Librarians Association 2022 Conference Program

Detailed Program & Abstracts

Day 1. Tuesday: November 29, 2022 (All times are in Denver time Zone – Mountain Daylight Time)

8:00-8:30: Registration

8:30-8:45: Welcome for MELA 50th Anniversary conference – Anais Salamon – MELA President

8:45-9:15: Opening Remarks:

MELA, its early history and impact on my activities / Fawzi Abdulrazak.

When asked to give a speech in this 50th anniversary celebration of MELA, I was delighted to oblige. The reasons for my enthusiasm because the occasion also marks my entry into the world of books and librarianship. In addition, I wanted to share with my old as well as new friends and colleagues some of my personal experiences as one of the earlier members of MELA, with its founders and distinguished activists, whom I admired and followed in helping to shape the association into the way we know it today.

9:30-10:30: Panel 1:

The Arabic Union Catalog: An international project for the collaborative cataloging of Arab libraries in the Middle East/ Sameh Nour Ahmed Mahfouz.

The Arabic Union Catalog (AUC) is a non-profit cooperative project, Arab and international oriented, that plays a key role in serving the Arab and Islamic knowledge community in the Middle East region and around the world. It has emerged as a powerful tool in strengthening the bonds of cooperation and effective participation among its members through an integrated and flexible participatory and cooperative environment through its platform cloud "Arabic Knowledge Services Platform." AUC aims to improve the quality of bibliographic and authority records by unifying the standards, codes, and practices. Researchers and knowledge institutions are served by providing advanced electronic information services within a high-quality technical environment. Moreover, several attempts have been made to develop the introduction of the collections and acquisitions (bibliographic and digital) to libraries and institutions in the Middle East that are members of AUC for a Better Discovery.
This paper is divided into two sections. The first section will give a brief overview of AUC, and this second section aims to investigate the services of AUC. Therefore, it will describe the four main packages of services: Technical services, Group support services, Training services, and Cloud services.
The website of the platform cloud "Arabic Knowledge services platform" and the formal documents and resources will use to examine these four packages of services and collect the data.
This study will be of value to Middle Eastern librarians who work in Cataloging and Technical Services and the

Middle Eastern Studies Liaison and Reference Librarians who support the teaching and research activities by developing and managing the library's collection in Middle Eastern and Arabic.

Developing an Integrated system for Purchasing Library Resources Lib-Hub: A Case Example from Iran / Roya Moradi and Mohammadreza Niazmand.

Libraries face a significant challenge regarding the lack of an automatic and technology-based system in the process of purchasing library resources. Therefore, facilitating the process of purchasing resources, especially books, requires developing a centralizing platform in order to minimize the time, cost, and confusion caused by not finding books. To meet this need, a brokering platform (Lib-Hub) was developed with the aim of integrating the book-purchase process for all the libraries from Iran.

Lib-hub closes the gap between the supply-demand chain of books among libraries and vendors in a win-win deal. The librarian uploads the list of needed resources in Lib-hub to display for various vendors. Each vendor who has any of these books enters all the bibliographic information, and its price, in Lib-Hub and sends it to the librarian. After choosing a vendor, the librarian pays for the book, and the vendor sends the book to him/her. Lib-Hub platform generally has the following features:

Services for Vendors:

- Informing vendors about the current needs of libraries
- Providing accurate and continuous bibliographic information for libraries
- Maintaining constant communication with libraries
- Forecasting the future needs of libraries

Services for libraries:

- Gathering information about a book's price and availability from different vendors
- Providing financial invoices for libraries automatically
- Carrying out reporting services to prepare the list of purchased books
- Negotiating with different vendors
- Increasing the chance of accessing books and reducing the ordering time

Dictionaries Are Also Dying? / Harun Tuncer

Due to various reasons, it has been always problematic to use manuscripts in any given language as a source of information. For sure, copying the manuscripts relied upon the accuracy of the scribes. As a result, researchers find it difficult to use the information from manuscripts.

The physical conditions of the MS's are also a matter concern. Sometimes word(s) are missing due to tears or wrinkles, and it becomes harder to be able to get the context. There we need lexicons and a more comprehensive experience with them.

On the other hand, it is a reality that print encyclopedias have lost the challenge brought forth by WWW. Now most of the print versions of well-known encyclopedias have been digitized and serving on a more global basis. This is undoubtedly a timesaving move. The same is to apply to the dictionaries as well. For an effective and quality experience with the lexicons we should be able to find words more swiftly and have the chance to display/see the whole textual content of a dictionary, not just the entries.

For the last three years, Kelime.com has been working on a full-fledged online dictionary for Ottoman Turkish incorporating 16 dictionaries for now. It allows you to search for words, phrases, patterns, proverbs, idioms, people, works, events and places in dozens of dictionaries in 10 languages; including English, German and French. Besides, Kelime.com determines in which definition of an entry the word searched for occurs and in which book it is included in sample sentences.

To sum up, words in a text sometimes cannot be read due to various reasons. So Kelime.com helps you -thanks to the specific wildcards- reach the rightest result with correct guesses in thousands of entries. This is surely a step taken for a clear understanding of any text with problems.

10:30-11:15: *Library of Congress Reports - Cairo Office and Islamabad Office* / William Kopycki & Fehl M. Cannon.

11:30-1:00: DLME Presentation and lunch discussion:

The Digital Library of the Middle East / Jacob Hill.

The Digital Library of the Middle East (DLME) offers free and open access to the rich cultural legacy of the Middle East and North Africa by bringing together collections from a wide range of cultural heritage institutions. Developed by an engineering team from CLIR and Stanford Libraries, the platform federates and makes accessible data about collections from around the world. The DLME has grown over the last five years into a mature digital project. The presentation will apprise users of the current state of the project (including its organizational structure, data partnerships, and technology stack), share thoughts on some of its strengths and successes, some remaining challenges, and future prospects for development.

Specifically, the DLME has been able to continue to grow in users and data partnerships over the last five years. It has identified to date over six hundred digital collections of MENA cultural heritage from over fifty countries and has aggregated nearly a hundred of these collections. It has developed an agile technology stack that enables it to operate and keep metadata fresh with maximum efficiency. It has begun significant collaborative projects with subject matter experts to bring new collections into DLME and improve the metadata and curatorial experience of subsets of its contents.

In addition to this presentation, we would like to propose a collaborative working session open to MELA members to further discuss issues raised in the presentation and allow MELA members to surface ideas on how MELA and DLME might collaborate. We would also like to host an evening reception. Ideally, the presentation, working session, and evening reception could take place on the same day, early in the conference, to allow time to continue discussions afterwards.

1:00-2:15: Panel 2:

An Innovative Approach in the Creation of Human Libraries in the Middle East and North Africa / Dr. Mohamed Abdulla & Ms. Elvira A. Zingapan.

The human library is like other libraries, but it allows people to borrow experienced people rather than books. The Human Library is a volunteer effort by experienced people to answer relevant questions, and volunteers have the option of not answering the questions and asking their own. In this study, the researchers examine how to establish human libraries in the Middle East and North Africa, taking advantage of the available human resources such as seniors, social media initiatives, homeless youths, social specialists, information and library specialists, and academic and business expertise. This project was described in detail and the purpose was determined. The surrounding environment was then tested to see how appropriate it is, define the project team and their abilities and skills, and develop strategies to provide service in the project in line with the requirements of the knowledge society. The findings describe variations in the importance of establishing a human library in supporting the knowledge society, as well as the impact of human libraries on the implementation of sustainable development in order to meet the UN Vision 2030 goals. In addition, challenges and opportunities for establishing human libraries in the Middle East and North Africa and the availability of innovative technology applications that are sufficient to support fully collaborative in building the knowledge society were highlighted.
Key words: Innovative approach, Human libraries, Sharing experiences, Knowledge society, MENA

Documenting and Digitizing Bedouin Culture: The Clinton Bailey Archive / Samuel Thrope.

The National Library is home to a unique research collection documenting the rich oral culture of Bedouin communities in Israel, Jordan, and the Sinai desert. The collection includes some 350 hours of recorded interviews with hundreds of Bedouin men and women, including judges, tribal sheikhs, and notables, as well as accompanying photos and other materials. The interviews, conducted in the Bedouin dialect of Arabic and recorded between 1968 and 2007, are the result of a lifetime of work by the American-Israeli scholar Dr. Clinton Bailey. Born in Buffalo, New York in 1937, after Bailey came to Israel in 1957 where he began interviewing members of the Bedouin community about their oral traditions, judicial system, and daily life.
In 2020, Bailey's archive of recorded interviews and photographs was acquired by the National Library. In order to make the collection as accessible as possible, the Library launched a major project to digitize the recordings and photos; create detailed cataloging records in Arabic, Hebrew, and English; and finally to transcribe the audio recordings into written Arabic.
This paper will discuss the collection's history, its scholarly importance, and the challenges that needed to be overcome in transforming it into an accessible and multi-lingual digital corpus.

Studying minorities: libraries beyond their boundaries / Yunus Abakay.

Libraries provide access to various bodies of knowledge, enabling students and researchers to explore and learn details about numerous subjects of interest. One of the areas that libraries fail to provide such ability is usually related to minorities about whom extensive knowledge is not available. The impact of power on knowledge production and the precarious state of minorities already brings limitations and obstacles to producing knowledge about certain ethnoreligious groups such as Kurds, Yazidis, Amazigh, Mandean, and Armenian. Although a limited number of publications and reports provide a basic level of information, they come short in delivering data about various aspects of social, political, and economic life. This absence deepens the invisibility of these groups and prevents further knowledge from being produced.
Lacking the political power to form a body of knowledge in their homeland, libraries abroad became sanctuaries to protect available knowledge. Archiving documents, books, and visual materials donated by activists and politicians and more funding opportunities have made universities in Global North intellectual hubs for minorities in MENA, such as Kurds. Exeter University, the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS) library is a case in point for Kurdish studies. It has become a key hub in attracting people to donate their archives and researchers around the globe to conduct research. Protecting valuable sources of knowledge and making them available for research have contributed to the diversity of research culture and the body of knowledge at the university. The IAIS library, as a case, has shown that making a body of knowledge accessible for research can increase interest in studying minorities and protect available knowledge against further deterioration.
Keywords Minorities, Archive, Kurdish Studies, Exeter University, Global North

The "KOHD-Digital" and "Qalamos" Portals – Current Developments in Manuscript Cataloging in Germany / Christoph Rauch.

After 65 years, the Academy project "Cataloguing of Oriental Manuscripts in Germany" (KOHD) will conclude its work at the end of 2022. About 180 printed catalog volumes as well as another 20,000 indexed works in the database "KOHD-Digital" are the lasting result of this unique long-term project, that was hosted by the Academy of Science in Göttingen during the last three decades. In the near future, KOHD-Digital will be merged with "Qalamos: Connecting Manuscript Traditions", a portal that was launched in June 2022. This union catalog, which already provides 145,000 records of manuscripts from numerous Asian and African script traditions, is currently developed in a project led by the Berlin State Library and funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Partners are the Bavarian State Library in Munich, the Gotha Research Library and the Leipzig University

Computing Centre. In a first stage, the project is focusing on the retro-conversion of printed catalogs of Islamic manuscripts.

My contribution outlines the activities in Germany in the field of manuscript cataloging in the context of current research in the field, and in particular addresses the following questions:

• What role do authority data play in manuscript cataloguing?

• What is planned for the second project phase of "Qalamos", which is scheduled to start at the end of 2023?

• How can we better incorporate data sets from international partners?

However, the focus should always be on the question of how we succeed in continuously adapting to the evolving requirements and needs of the international scholarly communities.

2:30-3:45: Panel 3:

From catalog cards to the cloud: Transforming the Near East Collections for Discovery and Access / Joan S. Weeks, Huda Dayton, Hirad Dinavari, Khatchig Mouradian, and Muhannad Salhi.

This panel comprised of the Near East Section area specialists … will showcase the acquisition, processing, and digitization projects that are underway to transform the Near East Collections for discovery and access.

As MELA celebrates its 50th Anniversary, the Near East Section specialists will trace the history of the Near East collections at the Library of Congress over the past half century. Highlights will include collections, previously only cataloged on cards that are receiving full cataloging records in preparation for the Next Gen catalog. The Arabic and Persian collections are rich in exquisitely illuminated manuscripts, lithographic books, and digitization projects underway are bringing these to researchers around the globe. Acquisitions, gifts and donations are enhancing the Armenian and Georgian collections, and their extensive, historical diaspora. The Ottoman collection printed in Arabic script is now fully cataloged and the modern Turkish collection is being enhanced with collections from Caucasus and Central Asia. Also growing are the Iranic language collections in Kurdish and Pashto. Web archiving is bringing endangered born digital content from the Middle East and Central Asian to worldwide audiences. Newspapers on microfilm and bound periodicals are being enhanced with holdings statements in the catalog and later issues are being digitized for the Library's electronic database system "Stacks.loc.gov".

The panel will highlight the best tips and searching strategies to have a rich research experience both virtually and onsite, as well as the new appointment and Ask a Librarian discovery and access tools. Social media blogs and Facebook posts will highlight the latest launch of digitization projects such as the Calligraphy sheet collection and Cuneiform tablets.

4:00-4:30: Panel 4:

Light Shone on a Hidden Collection: A Collaborative Project to Catalog Yale's Turkish MSS / Ayşe Çiçek Unal, Agnieszka Rec, Özgen Felek, and Roberta L. Dougherty.

In the fall of 2022, an innovative collaboration between Yale librarians and faculty was initiated to design a cataloging workflow and hire & train a graduate student to create original cataloging records for Yale's "hidden collection" of manuscripts in Ottoman Turkish. This collection of nearly 600 items has been growing since 1870 (its history was briefly described by participant Dougherty at MELA 2021) but to date had remained mostly uncataloged, with some items described only on untranscribed cards and worksheets created between the 1950s-1990s, and some not described at all. Until September 2022 Yale's online catalog contained only a single full record for any manuscript in this collection. An initial survey of this group of manuscripts was described by participant Dr. Felek in MELA Notes 94 (2021), and plans to create an opportunity for a graduate student to work with the manuscripts began to be developed in the spring of 2022. This presentation will give MELA participants the opportunity to learn about how the project was designed & developed, and its results to date.

4:30-5:15: MELA Notes Archive + MELA Network project

The Genesis of MELA : The History of the Middle East Librarian Association Through the MELA Notes Archive + MELA Network project / Farshad Sonboldel.

MELA Notes was born in the fall of 1973 as the official journal of the Middle East Librarians Association. Now, after 50 years, MELA Notes is an invaluable archive to study the history of Middle East Studies and Middle East Librarianship all over the world and particularly in North America. Since the very first issues of the journal, the founders of the MELA Notes recorded the history of Middle East Librarianship through several article series and reports such as Association Chronicle, The Genesis of MELA, and Report to the Membership.
In this presentation, I will deliver a quick overview of the development of MELA Notes in the first 50 years of its publication. Then, I will talk about the history of MELA and the activities of the founding members, as presented in the MELA Notes archive. Finally, I will talk about the most common, most influential, and/or timely topics covered in MELA Notes during the past half of the century. These topics include the new developments in the field of librarianship, the most recent technologies for Middle Eastern collections, and topical technical discussions in each period.

Wednesday: November 30, 2022 (All times are in Denver time Zone – Mountain Daylight Time)

8:30-9:45: Panel 5: Committee on Cataloging Workshop:

Linked data & BIBFRAME implementations : cataloging editors, with Arabic cataloging examples / Nancy Lorimer, Paul Frank, Magda Gad, and Amal Morsy, and moderator Iman Dagher.

Paul Frank (Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division) and Amal Morsy (Senior cataloger, Arabic specialist) at Library of Congress to present and demo cataloging in Marva.
Nancy Lorimer (Associate Director, Metadata Services) and Magda Gad (Metadata Librarian for Middle East resources) at Stanford to present and demo cataloging in Sinopia

10:00-11:00: Panel 6: Education Committee

A Reflective Roundtable on the Current state of Research Libraries and MENA Librarianship: Trends, Challenges, and Collectives / Sarah Demott, Amanda Hannoosh Steinberg, Salma Abumeeiz, Balsam Haddad, and Deborah J. Schlein.

At the MELA 2021 Annual Meeting, members of the Education and Social Justice Committees hosted a joint panel discussion titled 'Strategies for Working through Times of Precarity and Scarcity in Middle East Librarianship.' Building off of key themes addressed at the 2021 roundtable, this year's roundtable will consider how the landscape of research libraries and MENA Librarianship has (and has not) changed in the past year. By critically examining topics related to unionization, ongoing pandemics, hybrid and remote working conditions, and shifts in global area studies broadly, this interactive roundtable invites attendees to reflect on how the field currently exists, and how we might work to reimagine it collectively. This will be an interactive roundtable in which panelists will invite attendees to participate and share their thoughts. Attendees will also have the option of contributing anonymously via virtual options. Though panelists will be joining and facilitating the discussion remotely, engagement options will be available to attendees tuning in both in-person and online.

11:00-12:00: Panel 7:

Publishing and Bookselling in Contemporary Cairo / Yasmine El Dorghamy, Trevor Naylor, Marcia Lynx Qualey, Nadia Wassef, and moderator Roberta Dougherty.

This panel will bring together four leading figures in the fields of publishing and bookselling in modern Egypt:

- Yasmine El Dorghamy (publisher/founder, Rawi Magazine)
- Trevor Naylor (director, AUC Bookstore, and author, Egypt Inside Out and other titles)
- Marcia Lynx Qualey (editor/founder, ArabLit Quarterly)
- Nadia Wassef (founder, Diwan Bookshop)

The speakers will present their experiences in establishing (and sustaining) their respective enterprises, and what they have learned in the process about publishing, bookselling, and distribution in Egypt and internationally. None of the speakers are MELA vendors, however nearly all MELA members benefit from their contributions to the world of publishing in the Middle East. This panel will offer MELA members the benefit of the speakers' on-the-ground experience in dealing with this challenging environment, and should be of great interest, particularly as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations.

1:00-2:15: Panel 8:

Digital Scholarship Interest Group Workshop: Introduction to Arabic OCR / Jonathan Parkes Allen, and moderated by Dale Correa.

The Digital Scholarship Interest Group invites MELA members to attend a training on how to apply OCR/HTR (optical character recognition/handwritten text recognition) to digitized images of Arabic script texts. One of two pieces of software will be taught: either eScriptorium (first choice) or Tesseract. We are waiting to hear from eScriptorium's developers on their availability to train, and the current state of their product. The workshop will introduce attendees to the basics of the software, and how to get started with a digitized image. The discussion will also include helpful tips for digitization and image processing, as well as management of training models and OCR data.

2:15-3:00: Panel 9:

Middle Eastern Studies and Cooperative Collection Development/ David Faust, Evyn Kropf, Guy Burak, Deborah Schlein, Sean Swanick, Rustin Zarkar. Luo Zhou, and Mary Rader.

In the mid-20th century, libraries and institutions in the United States and Canada began serious development of Middle Eastern Studies resource collections. Led somewhat by the Library of Congress' creation of the Near East section in 1945, various institutions began seriously collecting such resources in a post-WWII era that held more interest in regional and area studies. In recognition of previous Area Studies collecting inadequacies in the US, the Farmington Plan (1948-1972) sought to build a national collection of foreign research publications in US libraries by separating collection area responsibilities by country and subject. Both about and from the Middle East and North Africa, these collections became a foundation for Middle Eastern Studies in North America. Our national and continental collections ensure the existence of Middle East resources across the United States and Canada. But where do we go from here?

Over recent decades, access to the national collection has been expanded through consortial agreements and digitization initiatives. However, as budgets are being cut and subject specialist librarians are taking on multiple roles, the intensity of collecting materials from the Middle East and North Africa in North America has not been able to keep up with the publication output from the regions. Where does this leave our national collections? Recalling the Farmington Plan's divisions of labor in collecting, librarians across the country have proposed, developed, and are working on or have already implemented various projects and approaches aimed at strengthening the national collection. This panel will bring together representatives from BTAA, MECDI, CEAL, and SACOOP to discuss their collaborative collection development efforts. Panelists will describe how their programs developed, how they divide their collective responsibilities, and how they maintain their programs.

Panel Participants: BTAA - David Faust and Evyn Kropf. MECDI - Guy Burak, Deborah Schlein, Sean Swanick, Rustin Zarkar. CEAL - Luo Zhou. SACOOP - Mary Rader.

3:15-4:30 **Business meeting** /Anais Salamon.

Thursday: December 1, 2022 (All times are in Denver time Zone – Mountain Daylight Time)

8:30-9:30: Panel 10:

Digital transformation for archival documents / Maryam AlMutawa.

Digital transformation for special collection becomes more important specially after the pandemic. The access to the historical and archival materials must be varied in order to contain any crisis. My presentation will highlight the digital transformation plan for the heritage collection in Qatar National Library, which include the digital archive electronic platforms, digital exhibitions, and digital interaction tools.

How the American University of Beirut and British Library joined efforts to save the Issa Iskandar Ma'luf Manuscript Collection **/** Samar El Mikati

The American University Libraries received a grant as part of the British Library's "Endangered Archives Programme", to clean, catalog, house, digitize and make a hundred manuscripts available through both libraries webpages accessible to researchers and scholars from around the world.
The Isa Iskandar al Ma'luf, a Lebanese prominent scholar (1869–1956), manuscript collection along with his unique library was purchased in 2015. The manuscript collection is around 400 manuscripts many of which were in a serious endangered situation. Due to almost sixty years of neglected storage, many items in the collection suffered from chemical and physical deterioration.
The manuscripts written in several languages, mainly Arabic, with the bulk dating between the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. The collection covers diverse subjects, authors, and provenance, as the collector compiled the manuscripts from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. The collection will be vital to researchers and codicologists interested in the culture of the Middle East and more specifically Lebanon.
The collection is unique in nature and cannot be easily matched to similar collections in other local or international libraries. In fact, researchers have started consulting several unique manuscripts while the collection is still in process.
Librarians Samar Mikati, Elie Kahale and Basma Chebaneh, would like to introduce this project to MELA members to highlight the importance, challenges and opportunities of such a project in an era were travelling to reach and use such resources is a bit hindered by economic and health barriers.

Enhancing access to digital collections through computational tools / Mark Muehlhaeusler.

Access to digitized library collections is hampered by the lack of granular metadata. This is particularly obvious in the case of magazine and image collections, which often have to be sorted, and searched manually. AUC Libraries are developing prototypes of software to aid the process of image discovery. Student interns from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering have created experimental tools to a) extract and tag images from digitized newspapers and magazines and b) recognize and tag images of people in historical photographs. This presentation will provide a demo of both tools, and discuss the underlying processes and their limitations.

9:45-12:30: Vendor showcase: Presentations by various vendor.

12:30-12:40: Conference closing / Anais Salamon.

The Middle East Librarians Association 2022 Conference Program

Speakers' short bios and job titles

Opening Remarks:

Fawzi Abdulrazak

Born In Musil, Iraq (1945) to a Turkumen family from Turk-Alaan near Kirkuk, Iraq. Primary and High School Education, Kirkuk, 1952-1963. BA in Islamic Law and Arabic Studies, Baghdad University, 1967. PhD. (History) Boston University, 1990. Hight School teacher, Iraq (1967-1969) and Algeria (1969-1972). Arabic Specialist, at Harvard College Library (1972-1997). PrivateTutor of Arabic language and literature. The Royal family of Jordan (1996-2000). Founder and President, Dar Mahjar Inc. (1981- until now). Founder; Managing Editor and Publisher of Mundus Arabicus (1981-   ). Program Chair - President, Middle East Librarians Association (1981-1982). Author of several published books; bibliographies; essays, and articles in Arabic and English, among them: The Fez Lithographs: Annotated Bibliography, 1865-1936. The Kingdom of the Book: The History of Printing in Morocco, 1865-1912. Forthcoming publications: Bibliography of Arabic Books in Morocco, 1912-1956. The History of Printing Arabic Books in Morocco during the French and Spanish Protectorates, 1912-1956.

Panel 1:

Harun TUNCER

Studied English Language and Literature at the University of Istanbul. Earned his MA on the life and works of James William Redhouse. Got his PhD, in the history of British missionary activities. Interested in the Turco-British relations in the 19th century. Worked for 13 years as a translator and editor. Now hired by #Hiperlink as Product Specialist, based in İstanbul. Have been lecturing for 3 terms at Medipol University.

Sameh Nour Ahmed Mahfouz: Assistant Professor – Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (IAU)

Roya Moradi is a Ph.D. candidate in medical information science at Isfahan University of medical science. She received a B.S. and M.S. degree in medical information science from the same university under the supervision of Dr. Mohammadreza Soleymani. As a master student, she investigated the effect of academic social networks (ResearchGate) on the research indicators. Currently, Moradi is working on "designing the knowledge brokering model for medical equipment research findings". Furthermore, she does some research in social data mining and she is working as a librarian at the university. She is an Entrepreneur, co-founder of new start-up that based on her idea won a grant from Shiraz innovation center entitled "knowledge brokering: the bridge between science and practice".

Mohammadreza Niazmand

I am a researcher in the field of Knowledge & Information Science (KIS), working as an expert at a major academic and research institute (a big database) entitled Regional Information Center for Science and Technology is short to be "RICeST". Furthermore, I am the supervisor of a number of employees in the data analysis department. My job involves editing and approving the records that are entered into the software by my colleagues. Before that, Also, I was an executive manager of IJISM (International Journal of Information Science and Management) journal for 1 year. I am an Entrepreneur, co-founder of new book application for cellphone (Ghasedak App).

Library of Congress report:

William Kopycki: Field director at Library of Congress Cairo and Nairobi offices

Fehl M. Cannon: Field director at Library of Congress Islamabad office

The Digital Library of the Middle East:

Jacob Hill: Jacob Hill works in Digital Library Systems and Services at Stanford University Libraries. He is the Data Manager and Project Coordinator for the [Digital Library of the Middle East](#).

Panel 2:

Dr. Christoph Rauch:

The head of the Oriental Department at the Berlin State Library and head of the project "Qalamos."
Samuel Thrope

Curator of the Islam and Middle East Collection at the National Library of Israel. A widely published author and translator, Dr. Thrope has written for both scholarly journals and popular newspapers and magazines. He is the translator of Iranian author Jalal Al-e Ahmad's 1963 Israel travelogue The Israeli Republic (Restless Books, 2017) and, with Dr. Domenico Agostini, of the ancient Iranian Bundahišn: The Zoroastrian Book of Creation (Oxford University Press, 2021).
Yunus Abakay

A PhD student at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at Exeter University and conducting research with a focus on Kurds and Syria. He holds a master's degree in Middle East Politics from SOAS, University of London and a BA in Public Administration from Istanbul University.
Mohamed Abdulla Mohamed

The Manager of the Learning and Resources Center at the Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University in Saudi Arabia. He also serves as the manager of the Professional Development Center and the manager of the Online Education Center in the same institution.

Panel 3:

Hirad Dinavari

Hirad Dinavari, is the senior Reference Librarian for the Iranic/Iranian Languages at the Library of Congress. He joined the Library in 2003 after working in the State Department's Educational Cultural Affairs branch as a Program Coordinator for Academic Exchange Programs with Eurasia. He is fluent in Persian and Urdu and has studied basic Russian, French and Arabic. His areas of focus and interest are mainly Middle Eastern and Eurasian studies, linguistics, history, and art history.

Huda Dayton

Huda Dayton joined the Near East section of the Library of Congress in January 2021 as an Arab area reference librarian. Prior to that she provided archival services to researchers and supported professional research at the National Archives and Records Administration in the Textual Research Room. She previously worked as a contractor in the Law Library cataloging and classifying Arabic, English, and French monographs and serials. Additionally she worked at the Georgetown University Library in Doha, Qatar, where she managed the Arabic collection and services. Before coming to the U.S. she was an academic lecturer at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia for ten years. Huda earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in library science from King Abdul Aziz University and her master's degree in library and information science from Catholic University.

Joan Weeks

Joan Weeks is Head of the Near East Section and Turkic Area Specialist in the African and Middle Eastern Division (AMED) at the Library of Congress. Since she joined AMED in 2015, she supervises a staff of seven, including Arab, Persian and Armenian specialists, reference librarians and library technicians, as well as volunteers, with responsibility to acquire, process, and serve the Near East Collections. She speaks fluent Turkish and has traveled extensively though Turkey and Turkic Central Asian. Prior to this, she was a Sr. Instruction Librarian in the Cooperative and Instructional Programs Division at the Library of Congress. Before coming to the Library, she worked with a Turkish Association. She holds an MA in International Studies with a Middle East and Turkic specialization from American University, an MA in Education from Marshall University, and an MLIS from Catholic University with a library computer systems concentration.

Khatchig Mouradian

Khatchig Mouradian. Ph.D. is the Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist in the African and Middle Eastern Division at the Library of Congress. He is also a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies (MESAAS) at Columbia University. Mouradian is the author of The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1918. He is the co-editor of two forthcoming volumes on Ottoman and Middle Easter History: After the Ottomans: Genocide's Long Shadow and Armenian Resilience (London: I.B. Tauris, forthcoming in 2023) and The I.B.Tauris Handbook of the Late Ottoman Empire: History and Legacy (under contract with I.B. Tauris).

Muhannad Salhi

Muhannad Salhi, Ph.D. is the Arab World Specialist in the Near East Section at the Library of Congress since 2008. He holds a Master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago. His PhD is in History also from the University of Chicago. He has been part of a number of organizations and peer groups that focus on library policies and collection development. He has been involved in projects and events at the Library as well as authoring a number of essays and blogs about collections from the Near East Section. He has received and briefed both foreign and domestic delegations and groups on behalf of the division. He has traveled on international delegations representing the Library of Congress as well as appearing in numerous media outlets. He has lectured widely on the library's collections in addition to modern Middle Eastern history at several institutions.

Panel 4:

Özgen Felek (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Yale University). Dr. Felek received her first Ph.D. from Fırat University in Turkey (2007), and her second from the University of Michigan (2010). Before joining Yale, she was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (2013-2016), and a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University (2011-2013). In addition to Ottoman and modern Turkish, her teaching and research interests include literature, gender, sexuality, and Sufism in the Ottoman Empire. She is also an accomplished artist of Islamic text illumination and miniature painting.

Agnieszka Rec (Yale University Library)

Dr. Rec received her Ph.D. in medieval history from Yale University in December 2016. Her dissertation, "Transmutation in a Golden Age: Reading Alchemy in Late Medieval and Early Modern Cracow," used the biography of an alchemical manuscript (Jagiellonian University BJ 5465) to reconstruct the community of practitioners in the Polish royal city and their ties to wider European traditions of alchemy. She is currently Early-Materials Cataloger in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Ayşe Çiçek Unal (Department of History, Yale University)

Ms. Unal's doctoral project at Yale focuses on seventeenth-century Ottoman North Africa and the early modern Mediterranean, with an emphasis on cultural and commercial exchanges between Europe and Ottoman Regencies: Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. She holds an M.A. degree from İstanbul Şehir University with a thesis examining Ottoman-Spanish diplomatic relations in the eighteenth century. Prior to Yale, she worked as a manuscript archivist and curator in Süleymaniye Manuscript Library in İstanbul, one of the richest manuscript libraries in the Islamic world.

Roberta Dougherty: The Librarian for Middle East Studies – Yale University

The Genesis of MELA:

Farshad Sonboldel: The Middle East Librarian – University of California Santa Barbara

Panel 5:

Amal Morsy: The Arabic cataloger for the Asian and Middle Eastern Division at the Library of Congress

Iman Dagher: The Arabic and Islamic Catalog Librarian at the University of California Los Angeles UCLA

Magda Gad: Metadata Librarian for Middle East Resources · Stanford University

Nancy Lorimer: Associate Director, Metadata Services at Stanford University

Paul Frank: NACO/SACO Coordinator, Cataloging Policy Specialist at the Library of Congress

Panel 6:

Amanda Steinberg: Librarian for Islamic Art & Architecture, Fine Arts Library at Harvard University.

Balsam Haddad: Head Librarian at American Islamic College

Deborah Schlein: Near Eastern Studies Librarian at Princeton University

Salma Abumeeiz: Research and Instruction Librarian at the University of California Los Angeles UCLA

Sarah DeMott: Research Librarian at Harvard University

Panel 7:

Yasmine El Dorghamy (RAWI Publishing)

Yasmine El Dorghamy is an adjunct professor of visual culture at the American University in Cairo and the founder of Rawi Publishing for Egyptian History, Heritage & Art, a bilingual research and publishing platform based in Cairo. Established in 2010, Rawi provides rich, inspiring—but also accessible—digital and print content in both English and Arabic on selected topics from Egyptian history. Previous editions have included reference-quality volumes on subjects ranging from costume and food to jewelry, cinema, and modern art. After 10 years of focusing on print publications, Rawi is now seeking to activate its prolific research output and increase its reach through an expanded digital presence and experiential activities such as interactive exhibitions and workshops.

Trevor Naylor (owner, Parkway Sales & Publishing Consultancy)

Trevor Naylor has worked in bookselling and publishing around the world for over forty years. Much of that time has been spent in and around the Middle East and Egypt, where he has travelled extensively. He lived in Egypt for over fifteen years, first managing & then directing the AUC Bookstore, and is the author of several books including the bestselling illustrated travelogues Cairo Inside Out (AUC Press, 2016) and Egypt Inside Out (AUC Press, 2020).

M. Lynx Qualey (founder, ArabLit & ArabLit Quarterly)

M Lynx Qualey is a literary critic, book editor, and occasional ghostwriter who runs the ArabLit website (arablit.org), which won a 2017 London Book Fair "Literary Translation Initiative" prize. She also publishes ArabLit Quarterly magazine and co-hosts the Bulaq podcast. Her Kirkus-starred co-translation of the middle-grade novel Ghady and Rawan (2019), co-written by Fatima Sharafeddine and Samar Mahfouz Barraj, is available from the University of Texas Press.

Nadia Wassef (founder, Maktabat Diwan, Cairo)

Nadia Wassef is an owner of Diwan, Egypt's first modern bookstore, which she co-founded in 2002 with her sister, Hind. She received an MFA from Birkbeck College at the University of London; a Master in Social Anthropology from the University of London; and a Master in English from American University in Cairo. Before Diwan, she worked in research and advocacy for the Female Genital Mutilation Taskforce and in the Women and Memory Forum. Featured on the Forbes List of the 100 Most Powerful Women in the Middle East in 2014, 2015, and 2016, Wassef's work has been covered in Time, Monocle, Business Monthly, and elsewhere. She lives in London with her two daughters. Diwan now has eight branches located throughout Egypt, and a publishing house of its own as well.

Roberta Dougherty: The Librarian for Middle East Studies – Yale University

Panel 8:

Jonathan Parkes Allen: Post-doctoral Scholar, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland

Dale Correa: The Middle Eastern Studies Librarian & History Coordinator – University of Texas at Austin

Panel 9:

David Faust is the Librarian for South Asia and the Middle East, and Collections Coordinator for Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Professional Programs at the University of Minnesota. He works with the South Asian Cooperative Collection Development Workshops, the South Asia Open Archives, and the BTAA Middle East Collaborative Collection Development working group.

Deborah Schlein: The Near Eastern Studies Librarian at Princeton University, and a founding member of MECDI.

Evyn Kropf is the Librarian for Middle Eastern & North African Studies and Religious Studies; Curator, Islamic Manuscripts Collection, University of Michigan. BTAA Middle East Collaborative Collection Development Working Group.

Guy Burak: The Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Librarian - The Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University. A founding member of MECDI.

Luo Zhou is the Chinese Studies Librarian, Duke University. She is an active member of CEAL and is currently leading "The Memory Project", an extensive collection of oral history on one of modern China's most traumatic episodes, the Great Famine of 1958-1962.

Mary Rader is the South Asian Studies Liaison Librarian and the Head of the Arts, Humanities, and Global Studies Engagement Team, University of Texas at Austin. She works closely with the communities associated with UT's South Asia Institute, the South Asian Cooperative Collection Development Workshops and the South Asia Open Archives.

Rustin Zarkar: The Middle East and Islamic Studies Librarian – University of North Carolina. A founding member of MECDI.

Sean Swanick: The Librarian for Middle East, North Africa, and Islamic Studies - Duke University. A founding member of MECDI.

Panel 10:

Maryam A. Al-Mutawa:

"Maryam is the head of special collection access at Qatar National Library, which is the section managing the digitization projects, exhibitions and events, she is also working on the national archival collection development. She holds a master of Art in Islamic civilization from Hamad bin Khalifa University in Qatar. Worked in number of Digital transformation projects for special collection in QNL, and managing a project related to Digital family archive and Oral history. Her research interest is Archival material preservation and digital accessibility".

Samar EL Mikati:

Associate University Associate University Librarian for Archives and Special Collections. Mikati holds a Master of Library and Information Science (MS): Archives Management Concentration from Simmons University, Boston, MA. Member of various national and international societies. Gave several presentation in international conferences and supervised most digitization projects of AUB's special collections, 2005-2022.

Basma Chebani:

Associate University Librarian for Cataloging and Metadata Services, American University of Beirut Libraries, has had long experience in implementing library systems and automating the library catalog, beginning with the MARC 21 format, introducing RDA, and adapting the Dublin core format for the libraries' digital collections. Basma is involved in most digitization projects at the University Libraries: Arabic Collections Online, from 2012; Building up the Palestinian Oral History Thesaurus (POHA), from 2014; and Al Adab Magazine Archives, 2014-2017.

Elie Kahale:

Director of Digital Scholarship and Initiatives at AUB University Libraries. He is engaged in several initiatives to preserve AUB Libraries digital assets and Cultural Heritage objects in addition to disseminate digital content to scholars, researchers and to the largest possible audience. He is also the co-organizer of AUB Digital Humanities Institute and collaborates with different scholars, researchers and institutions on digital liberal arts and digital humanities projects

Mark Muehlhaeusler:

The Director of the Center of Excellence for the Middle East and Arab Cultures at AUC Libraries. He is in charge of collection development in Middle Eastern Studies, and is involved in a number of digital initiatives, including the management of AUC's institutional repository.

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