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MELA NOTES

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2022

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

NAWAZALI A. JIWA	
Shīʿism, Sects, and Subject Headings	1
JOAN WEEKS ET AL.	
From the Catalog Cards to the Cloud: Transforming the Near East Collections for Discovery and Access.....	33
ÖZGEN FELEK ET AL.	
Light Shone on a Hidden Collection: A Collaborative Project to Catalog Yale's Turkish MSS.....	56
MARYAM A. AL-MUTAWA	
The Digital Experience in the Division of Special Collections at the Qatar National Library	75
FARSHAD SONBOLDEL	
The Story of Middle East Studies Librarianship through the MELA Notes Archive	86

REVIEWS

AKIN-KIVANÇ: <i>Muthanna/Mirror Writing in Islamic Calligraphy: History, Theory, and Aesthetics</i> (Denise Soufi)	96
FARZANEH: <i>Iranian Women & Gender in the Iran-Iraq War</i> (Shahrazad Khosrowpour)	97
QANDIL: <i>The Last Ottoman Wars: The Human Cost, 1877–1923</i> (Aram Ghoogasian)	99
KHAİR-EDDINE: <i>Agadir. Translated by Pierre Joris and Jake Syersak</i> (Sumayya Ahmed).....	102

MAKDISI: <i>Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World</i> (Sean E. Swanick)	104
SCHILL: <i>Réveiller l'archive d'une guerre coloniale : Photographies et écrits de Gaston Chérau, correspondant de guerre lors du conflit italo-turc pour la Libye (1911–1912)</i> (Rachel Simon).....	106
FERRARI AND ROHE: <i>À fendre le cœur le plus dur</i> (Rachel Simon).....	106

ANNOUNCEMENTS

George Atiyeh Award Essay (Ryan Zohar)	109
George Atiyeh Award Essay (Ayah Elkossei).....	112

ANNUAL MEETING 2021

Minutes and Reports	115
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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is impossible for me to convey in words the depth of my gratitude to Dr. Marlis J. Saleh for her contributions to the MELA community and especially MELA Notes. Dr. Saleh served as the editor of this journal beginning in 2007 and stepped down from this position in 2022, after nearly 15 years. I have worked as the Book Review Editor under Dr. Saleh's mentorship since 2021, an experience that has bestowed me with great learning about scholarly communication as well as librarianship. As the new Editor, I would like to thank Dr. Saleh for her commitment to the MELA Notes—and for serving as a model for those who follow in her footsteps.

I am also pleased to report that Dr. Hiba Abid, curator for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the New York Public Library, has joined the Editorial Board as of January 2023 as the new Book Review Editor.

Due to the changes in the Editorial Board, the publication of MELA Notes was delayed for a few months this year. The issue in hand, number 95 (2022), is published and appeared electronically at <http://www.mela.us/publications/mela-notes/mela-notes-archive/>. The print issue is also produced and distributed to the membership and subscribers.

Finally, I would like to thank our wonderful colleagues, Salma Abumeeiz, Ryan Zohar, Jealool Amari, Bebe Chang, Emma Moros, and Arthur Decker, who generously agreed to contribute to this issue as proofreaders.

Kind regards,
Farshad Sonboldel, Editor

Shī'ism, Sects, and Subject Headings

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INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

Abstract

The problem of bias in Knowledge Organization Systems (KOSs) has been the focus of numerous 'radical cataloging' studies. This study examines the use of the term *sect* as it is applied to the Shī'ī (or Shī'a) branch of Islam in various KOSs including the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system, and indigenous Islamic classification schemes. The study demonstrates how the use of the term *sect* is discriminatory and disparaging towards library users who identify as Shī'ī Muslims. It also offers non-pejorative alternatives that can be used in its place to refer to a living tradition.

Keywords: Bias, KOSs, Radical Cataloging, Sects, Shī'ism, Subject Headings

Introduction and Context

Though the term 'radical cataloging' has been in use in the Library and Information Studies (LIS) field for over two decades, the concept has been practiced for much longer.¹ Radical cataloging attempts to identify bias in Knowledge Organization Systems (KOSs), and propose remedies to eliminate, or at least mitigate, a particular bias.

[Specifically, it is], concerned with changing the terms used to include/exclude not only visible, ethnic, and linguistic minorities but also women, gays and lesbians, and children and youth while simultaneously working to introduce a

¹ K. R. Roberto, preface to *Radical Cataloging: Essays at the Front* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), 1–3.

lexicon that can account for new political and cultural movements.²

The objective of radical cataloging is to facilitate equal and equitable access for all users.³ It is against this background that the present study intends to examine the term ‘Islamic sects’ in various KOSs with reference to Shī‘ism. This paper will first review the relevant literature before giving a brief overview of Shī‘ism. It will be followed by a discussion of the issues associated with the classification of Shī‘ism as a sect. Attention then turns to an analysis of this classification in the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system, and indigenous Islamic classification schemes.⁴ After an exploration on the principle and practice of ‘warrants,’ this paper will offer some recommendations towards more inclusive and neutral terminology.

[A Knowledge Organization System (KOS)], is a generic term used for referring to a wide range of items (e.g. subject headings, thesauri, classification schemes and ontologies), which have been ... designed to support the organization of knowledge and information in order to make their management and retrieval easier.⁵

The LCSH is an established list of pre-defined terms or phrases that attempt to capture the content of a work. These subject headings will be examined in the first section of this study. The DDC and indigenous Islamic systems are classification schemes that also use headings, but not in the same manner as the LCSH. A heading in these schemes is

² Kate Eichhorn, “Radical Catalogers and Accidental Archivists: The Barnard Zine Library,” chap. 4 in *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2013), 137, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bsx7w>.

³ For a sampling of these studies, see Brian M. Watson, “Advancing Equitable Cataloging,” *Proceedings from North American Symposium on Knowledge Organization* 8 (2021): 1–28, <https://journals.lib.washington.edu/index.php/nasko/article/view/15887>.

⁴ The terms ‘schemes’ and ‘systems’ are used interchangeably.

⁵ *ISKO Encyclopedia of Knowledge Organization*, s.v. “Knowledge organization system (KOS),” accessed October 03, 2022, https://www.isko.org/cyclo/knowledge_organization.

“the word or phrase used as the description of a given class.”⁶ The headings or ‘captions’ of the DDC and indigenous Islamic systems will be examined in the second section of this study.

Literature Review

A review of the literature on bias in subject headings cannot be presented without mentioning the work of Sanford Berman. In his book *Prejudices and Antipathies* published in 1971, the following oft-quoted passage is still as relevant now as it was over half a century ago:

[The Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)] list can only ‘satisfy’ parochial, jingoistic Europeans and North Americans, white-hued, at least nominally Christian (and preferably Protestant) in faith, comfortably situated in the middle- and higher-income brackets, largely domiciled in suburbia, fundamentally loyal to the Established Order, and heavily imbued with the transcendent, incomparable glory of Western civilization.⁷

The book enumerates a list of biased LCSH and their remedies approximately 19 percent of which pertain to religion.⁸ Moreover, Berman’s approach to transforming biased subject headings assigned to each religion insists on reflecting the “language, experience, and viewpoint”⁹ of its adherents. Berman’s *Prejudices and Antipathies* lists the heading ‘Mohammadanism’¹⁰ and its variants that are considered to be disparaging by Muslims. The term is owed to the

⁶ Melvil Dewey, *Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index*, 23rd ed., vol. 1 (Dublin, OH: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, 2011), lxxvii. More on this later in the section on DDC.

⁷ Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971), ix.

⁸ Berman’s book consists of 225 subject headings of which 41 were perceived to be of a religious nature. See also the appendix in Steven A. Knowlton, “Three Decades Since *Prejudices and Antipathies*: A Study of Changes in the Library of Congress Subject Headings,” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2005): 130–145, https://doi.org/10.1300/J104v40n02_08.

⁹ Though this statement is in reference to classifying Judaica, it no doubt applies to all faiths. Berman, “Beyond the Pale: Subject Access to Judaica,” *Technical Services Quarterly* 2, no. 1–2 (1985): 173, https://doi.org/10.1300/J124v02n01_12.

¹⁰ Original in capitals. See Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies*, 37.

“false medieval notion that Muslims worshipped Muhammad in the way that Christians revered Christ.”¹¹ The heading was replaced by the terms ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ in 1964 which was, according to Berman, “perhaps the greatest and longest overdue heading-rectification in many years.”¹²

Haroon Idrees highlights the “bias and interest in Christianity and less or even no interest in Islam” on the part of standard classification schemes, especially in the DDC system.¹³ This bias, alongside a lack of “awareness of devisers by [the] depth and variety of Islamic knowledge, its topics, subjects, and disciplines” has prompted two different ‘indigenous’ responses from the Muslim world.¹⁴ The first is to propose amendments and expansions to the existing DDC system, and the second is to develop independent classification schemes. Idrees carefully and critically scrutinizes the literature for both types of efforts. Due to the divergence within and between the two, there is no “uniformity or standardization” across libraries in classifying Islamic materials.¹⁵ The next part of his study seeks out the views of scholars in LIS and Islamic studies, along with library practitioners as to an ‘optimal solution’ to the problem. Based on the review of the literature and empirical data, Idrees concludes that there is a need to develop a new independent classification system. He undertakes the task himself and utilizes this opportunity to create a “comprehensive list of subject headings for Islam.”¹⁶

Blake Robinson situates his study within the context of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*.¹⁷ Thereafter, Robinson offers a more in-depth overview

¹¹ *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, s.v. “Orientalism and Islam,” accessed October 03, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780195390155-0058>.

¹² Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies*, 38.

¹³ Idrees, “Development of a Classification Scheme for Islam,” (PhD diss., Humboldt University of Berlin, 2012), 56.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁷ Robinson, “Addressing Bias in the Cataloging and Classification of Arabic and Islamic Materials: Approaches from Domain Analysis,” in *Library and Information Science in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Amanda B. Click, Sumayya Ahmed, Jacob Hill, and John D. Martin III (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 255–269, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110341782-015>.

of Sanford Berman's painstaking efforts to eradicate bias in the LCSH. The author then identifies three different directions of scholarship pertinent to 'Arab and Islamic materials,' including those who address bias in "descriptive cataloging practices particularly as it relates to Arabic names and titles;" those who focus on "improving subject cataloging practices in the Arab and Islamic world;" and those who "criticize Eurocentrism and Anglocentrism in KO [knowledge organization] systems as a whole."¹⁸ Robinson proceeds to provide insightful examples that illustrate the difficulties associated with the cataloging and classification of such materials. He concludes by proposing that domain analysis may be a remedy for overcoming some of these difficulties.

Shī'ism: A Brief Overview¹⁹

The term 'Shī'ī' or 'Shī'a'²⁰ literally means 'partisans' or 'adherents' and refers to one of the two main branches of Islam, the other being the Sunnīs. The Sunnīs form a majority comprising 85 percent of the Muslim community, while the Shī'īs (anglicized as Shiites) comprise the remaining 15 percent.²¹ The Sunnīs maintain that the *Qur'ān* and the *sunnah* or the teaching and practice of the Prophet Muḥammad, as well as *ijmā'* or the consensus of Islamic scholars, are sufficient sources of religious guidance.

The Shī'īs uphold the view that divine guidance continues after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad (d. 632). This guidance is entrusted to 'Alī, the first cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and his descendants. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 661) is considered to be the fourth Caliph and the first Imam or spiritual and secular leader. The office of the Imam is referred to as the Imamate or *Imamah*. There were a

¹⁸ Ibid., 261.

¹⁹ This section draws from a variety of sources, including *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2009), s.v. "Shī'ī Islam.;" Farhad Daftary and Azim A. Nanji, "What is Shiite Islam?" in *Voices of Islam*, ed. Vincent J. Cornell, vol. 1, *Voices of Tradition* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 217–244; and *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed. (2005), s.v. "Shiism."

²⁰ These two terms are used interchangeably.

²¹ Wendell G. Johnson, "In Search of the Caliphate," *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* 16, no. 2 (2017): 43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10477845.2017.1281066>.

plethora of groups that emerged over disputes as to the identity of the rightful Imam, as well as his exact role and function. These groups, over one hundred by one account,²² either expired or became absorbed into the three main Shī'ī groups that are still active today.

These three groups are the Zaydīs, Ismā'īlīs and Ithnā 'Asharis (Twelvers). Upon the death of the fourth Imam Zayn al-Ābidīn (d. 714), one group recognized the rights of his son Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 732) for the position of Imam, while a different group supported the rights of his other son, Zayd b. 'Alī (d. 740). This group is hence known as the Zaydīs (anglicized as Zaydites/Zaidites) or 'Fivers.'

Another succession dispute occurred after the death of the sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 765).²³ One group supported the Imamate of his son Ismā'īl (d. after 754) while a different group supported the Imamate of his half-brother Mūsā al-Kāzim (d. 799). The former group referred to as Ismā'īlīs (anglicized as Ismailites) are also known as 'Seveners' as they initially acknowledged seven Imams.²⁴

One of the descendants of this line of Imams, 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī (d. 934), founded the Fāṭimid empire (909-1171) and was its first Imam-Caliph. It was during the reign of the sixth Fāṭimid Imam-Caliph Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (d. 1021) that a group attributed divinity to him. This group, the Druzes, survives to this day and are awaiting the return of al-Ḥākim after his mysterious disappearance.

Upon the death of the eighth Fāṭimid Imam-Caliph al-Musta'ṣir (d. 1094), the Ismā'īlīs within the empire and elsewhere were compelled into pledging allegiances to either Nizār (d. 1095) or al-Musta'li (d. 1101). The former group established the Nizārī state in Persia (1090-1256) and it is these Ismā'īlīs that were and are still disparagingly

²² *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia* (2006), s.v. "Shi'ism."

²³ The Nizārī Ismā'īlīs do not consider al-Ḥasan (d. 669), the son of Imam 'Alī, to be a permanent Imam and al-Ḥasan's name is omitted from their list of Imams. The Musta'lian Ismā'īlīs consider Imam 'Alī to be the foundation (*asās*) of all Imams and is *ipso facto* not counted as the first Imam. Therefore, Ja'far al-Šādiq is acknowledged as the fifth Imam by the Ismā'īlīs and the sixth Imam by the Twelvers.

²⁴ The term seveners (*sab'iyya*) is "incorrect, as all contemporary branches of Ismā'īlism recognize lines of imams in excess of seven. The term can be correctly applied only to the bulk of early Ismailis, as well as the Qarmāṭis," a now defunct group of Ismā'īlism. *Historical Dictionary of the Ismailis* (2012), s.v. "Sab'iyya."

referred to as the 'Assassins.'²⁵ The modern-day Nizārī Ismā'īlī community is currently headed by their forty-ninth present and living Imam, the Aga Khan IV.

The latter group, known as the Musta'lians, eventually divided into Ḥāfiẓī and Ṭayyibī factions. Al-Ṭayyib was the twenty-first Imam and the successor to the tenth Fāṭimid Imam-Caliph al-Āmir (d. 1130). It is believed by his followers called Bohras that Imam al-Ṭayyib entered seclusion (*saṭr*) and entrusted the affairs of the group to a series of lineally descendant representatives (*dā'īs*). The modern day Dā'ūdī, Sulaymānī, and 'Alawī Ismā'īlī Bohra communities each follow a distinct line of *dā'īs*.

The supporters of the aforementioned Imamate of Mūsā al-Kāẓim followed a line of twelve Imams and hence are referred to as 'Twelvers' or Ithnā 'Asharis. The last of the Twelver Imams, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, is believed to have gone into absence or occultation (*ghayba*) and will return as the *Mahdī* at the end of time to restore divine justice on Earth. The Twelvers currently form the majority of the Shī'īs (80 percent),²⁶ followed by the Ismā'īlīs. There are also other minority Shī'ī groups that still survive to the present day including the Nuṣayrī-'Alawīs, 'Alawīs (Alevi) and the Ahl-i Ḥaqq. These groups are often classified in polemical contexts as *ghulāt* (extremists) as they espouse beliefs outside the bounds of 'mainstream' Sunnī and Shī'ī Islam. These beliefs include the ascription of superhuman qualities to the Imams and their deification. A more neutral translation of *ghulāt* is 'exaggerators' which "better expresses the religious connotation of the term."²⁷

²⁵ See Shafique N. Virani, "An Old Man, A Garden, and an Assembly of Assassins: Legends and Realities of the Nizari Ismaili Muslims," *Iran* (2021): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/05786967.2021.1901062>.

²⁶ *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices*, 2nd ed. (2015), s.v. "Islam: Shiism."

²⁷ Andrew J. Newman, review of *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects*, by Matti Moosa, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 2 (1990): 243, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074380003347X>.

Shī'ism and Sects

The tendency to classify Shī'ism as a sect and the various groups within it as sects or sub-sects is particularly problematic. According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*:

Historically, the term 'sect' applied to religious movements within the Christian tradition that deviated from official ... doctrines and/or conflicted with Church authority.²⁸

However, the concept of the 'church' as understood by Christians is absent in Islam. The church-sect distinction, then, is an imposition of a Christian viewpoint onto Islam. Moreover, the notion of a sect contains connotations of deviance which raises the question: Which parent body are Muslim sects deviating from? There is no 'orthodoxy' in Islam though its Sunnī branch has often been positioned as such.²⁹

[Therefore], the terms 'sect' ... and 'orthodoxy' are of limited use in understanding the internal structures existing within Islam, as these terms have been primarily developed from case studies of Christian and quasi-Christian groups. [There are also] problems of fit which may lead to confusion when these terms are applied to Islam.³⁰

Within Islam, the closest approximation of the term sect is *firqa* (pl. *firāq*).³¹ There is a saying (*ḥadīth*) of the Prophet Muḥammad that states his community will be divided into seventy-three sects only one of which will be saved. This ignited both Sunnī and Shī'ī authors to write accounts (heresiographies) of sects. These accounts range from those that are neutral in tone to those that are vitriolic and hostile. Examples of the latter which targeted Shī'ism include al-Baghdādī's (d. 1037), *The Distinction between the Sects*, and Ibn Ḥazm's (d. 1064) *The Division between the Religious Groups, and Followers of Fancy*

²⁸ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (2003), s.v. "Sect."

²⁹ See M. Brett Wilson, "The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of 'Orthodoxy' in the Study of Islam," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2007): 169–194, <https://doi.org/10.1558/cis.v3i2.169>; and Christine D. Baker, "When Did Sunnism Become Orthodox?" chap. 1 in *Medieval Islamic Sectarianism* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019), 17–25, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781641890830-005>.

³⁰ Ahmed Y. Andrews, "The Concept of Sect and Denomination in Islam," *Religion Today* 9, no. 2 (1994): 9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537909408580709>.

³¹ Hussein Rashid, "Plural Voices in the Teaching of Islam," *Thresholds in Education* 41, no. 2 (2018): 95, <https://academyedstudies.files.wordpress.com/2018/06/rashidfinal.pdf>.

and the Sectarians.³² While the term *firqa* simply means ‘group’ or ‘division,’ it is employed in such heresiographies in a derogatory as opposed to a complimentary sense.

Both the Christian and Islamic traditions include instances whereby a negative connotation has been attached to the term sect (*firqa* in Islam). In addition, the sociological criteria for sect as outlined by Max Weber “fail to engage on the Islamic phenomena.”³³ The same also applies to later taxonomies of the term.³⁴ In fact, the designation of sect is a “stereotype-loaded term”³⁵ that is (or at least should be) “avoided by scholars.”³⁶ The overall baggage carried by the term indicates that it does not convey the subtleties and intricacies of Shī'ism in a non-judgmental manner.

Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)

The Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) “is the most widely used subject vocabulary in the world.”³⁷ Though its development began in 1898, it was not until 1909 that its first edition was published intermittently up to 1914. Different editions of the LCSH were published under variant titles until the release of its eighth edition in 1975, when the title was standardized to *Library of Congress Subject Headings*. The last print version of the LCSH was published in 2016 coinciding with its thirty-eighth edition. At the time of this writing, it is in its forty-fourth edition which is published online and is freely accessible to the public.

³² *Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilisation and Religion* (2008), s.v. “Heresiographical Works.”

³³ Michael Cook, “Weber and Islamic Sects,” in *Max Weber & Islam*, ed. Toby E. Huff and Wolfgang Schluchter (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 277.

³⁴ See Adam Gaiser, “A Narrative Identity Approach to Islamic Sectarianism,” in *Sectarianization: Mapping the Politics of the New Middle East*, ed. Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel (London: Hurst, 2017), 65.

³⁵ *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed. (2005), s.v. “Cults and Sects.”

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 4th ed. (2018), s.v. “Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH).” See also, “Introduction to Library of Congress Subject Headings,” Library of Congress, accessed October 03, 2022, <https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeLCSH/freelcsh.html>

A ‘LC Subject Headings’ search for ‘Islamic sects’ reveals that both the terms ‘Shī‘ah’ and ‘Sunnites’ (anglicization of Sunnīs) are currently listed as ‘Narrower Term(s)’ (NT).³⁸ Within the LCSH “the references are hierarchical, and each NT is a part of the concept represented in the BT” or ‘Broader Term’ which in this case is ‘Islamic sects.’³⁹ In older editions of the LCSH, a *see also* reference was “made from broader to more specific headings.”⁴⁰ The fourth edition of the LCSH contains the heading ‘Mohammadan Sects’ and lists the ‘Shiites’ and other groups such as the ‘Druses,’ ‘Ismailites,’ and ‘Zaidites,’ as *see also* references.⁴¹ This means that the LC subscribed to the misconception that Sunnism is representative of ‘orthodox’ Islam while Shī‘ism and other groups are ‘heterodox’ sects. The subsequent addition of the ‘Sunnities’ as a *see also* reference in the sixth edition,⁴² and later as a NT under the heading ‘Islamic sects’ is illogical.⁴³

A full discussion of the current heading ‘Islamic sects’ is outside the scope of this paper as the focus is on Shī‘ism. Nonetheless, it would be remiss to not provide some general observations about the current

³⁸ “Library of Congress Subject Headings,” Library of Congress, accessed October 03, 2022, <https://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects.html>.

³⁹ *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 4th ed. (2018), s.v. “Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH).”

⁴⁰ Subject Cataloging Division, introduction to *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, 9th ed., vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1980), ix.

⁴¹ Subject Cataloging Division and Mary W. MacNair, ed., *Subject Headings Used in the Dictionary Catalogs of the Library of Congress*, 4th ed., vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1943), 947.

⁴² Subject Cataloging Division and Marguerite V. Quattlebaum, ed., *Subject Headings Used in the Dictionary Catalogs of the Library of Congress*, 6th ed. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1957), 799.

⁴³ There existed a misconception in writings that predate even the first edition of the LCSH that Sunnism is a ‘sect’ of Islam. See, for example, Edward Sell, “The Sects of Islam,” *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 28, no. 109 (1879): 583–600; and *A Dictionary of Islam* (1885), s.v. “Sects of Islam.” However, by the time the sixth edition was published in 1957, it was more widely (and incorrectly) understood that Sunnism represented ‘orthodox’ or ‘official’ Islam. See for example, William Thomson, “The Sects and Islam,” *The Muslim World* 39, no. 3 (1949): 208–222, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.1949.tb01011.x>; and Hamilton A. R. Gibb, “Orthodoxy and Schism,” chap. 7 in *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, 2nd ed. (New York: The New American Library, 1955).

heading.⁴⁴ In 1987, the two UFs ('Used For' which functions as a *see* reference), 'Sects, Islamic' and 'Sects, Muslim' were removed. In 2009, the same two UFs were reinstated and a RT (Related Term) reference 'Islamic heresies' was added.⁴⁵ There is no reason given for this, and the term 'heresies' has its own set of issues not to be expounded here.

Furthermore, the NTs 'Asharites'⁴⁶ and 'Motazilites'⁴⁷ are schools of theology (*kalām*). The four NTs, 'Hanafites,' 'Hanbalites,' 'Malikites,' and 'Shafiites' represent Sunnī *madhhab*s (schools of law).⁴⁸ The NTs 'Salafiyyah'⁴⁹ and 'Wahhābīyah'⁵⁰ designate Sunnī reform and revival movements. The NTs 'Badawīyah,'⁵¹ 'Bektashi,'⁵² and 'Murīdīyah'⁵³ are Ṣūfī orders (*tarīqahs*).⁵⁴ The NTs 'Assassins (Ismailites)'⁵⁵ and 'Karmathians'⁵⁶ fall under the purview of the Ismā'īlīs and hence under Shī'ism. Within the heading 'Shī'ah,'⁵⁷ the NT 'Hurufīs'⁵⁸ of which the NT 'Nuḡṭavīyah' are considered to be an "offshoot,"⁵⁹ best belong to the province of Sufism. The NTs 'Akhbārīyah'⁶⁰ and 'Uṣūlīyah'⁶¹ refer to Twelver schools of law. Finally, the NT 'Batinites'⁶² literally means the 'esotericists' and is a pejorative synonym for the 'Ismailites.'

⁴⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁴⁵ Paul Frank, email message to author, February 24, 2021. I wish to acknowledge his assistance in sharing this and related information.

⁴⁶ *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics* (2014), s.v. "Ash'arism."

⁴⁷ *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics* (2014), s.v. "Mu'tazilah."

⁴⁸ *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2009), s.v. "Law."

⁴⁹ *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2009), s.v. "Salafiyyah."

⁵⁰ *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2009), s.v. "Wahhābīyah."

⁵¹ *Historical Dictionary of Sufism*, 2nd ed. (2016), s.v. "Badawīya."

⁵² *Historical Dictionary of Sufism*, 2nd ed. (2016), s.v. "Baktāshīya."

⁵³ *Historical Dictionary of Sufism*, 2nd ed. (2016), s.v. "Murīdīya."

⁵⁴ See *Historical Dictionary of Sufism*, 2nd ed. (2016), s.v. "Order."

⁵⁵ *Historical Dictionary of the Ismailis* (2012), s.v. "Assassins."

⁵⁶ *Historical Dictionary of the Ismailis* (2012), s.v. "Qarmaṭīs."

⁵⁷ See Appendix 2.

⁵⁸ *Historical Dictionary of Sufism*, 2nd ed. (2016), s.v. "Hurūfīya."

⁵⁹ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (1954-2005), s.v. "Nuḡṭawīyya."

⁶⁰ *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2009), s.v. "Akhbārīyah."

⁶¹ *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2009), s.v. "Uṣūlīyah."

⁶² *Historical Dictionary of the Ismailis* (2012), s.v. "Bāṭinīs, Bāṭiniyya."

The heading 'Islamic sects' is itself a NT for the BT 'Sects.' The scope note for 'Sects' reads:

Here are entered works on religious groups whose adherents recognize special teachings or practices which fall within the *normative* bounds of the major world religions. [emphasis added]⁶³

Since the "Sunni model of 'what is Islam' is considered normative (consciously or unconsciously)," why include it at all? Moreover, how does one account for the inclusion of, as some argue, "sects like the Ahmadiyyas and Druze, whose Islamic identity is contested?"⁶⁴ The many misclassifications of the various groups indicate that the entire section on 'Islamic sects' is in need of a major overhaul beginning with a change of the heading. This change will also ameliorate the bias in KOSs that draw upon the LCSH. These KOSs include WorldCat descriptors, EBSCO's Comprehensive Subject Index (CSI), and ProQuest Summon subject terms.

Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system is the "world's most widely used library classification system."⁶⁵ The DDC was formulated by Melvil Dewey in 1873, and its first edition, "a modest pamphlet of 44 pages,"⁶⁶ was published in 1876. It has since undergone twenty-three different editions, the last of which was published in 2011. The twenty-third edition was the final print version consisting of four volumes. The most updated version of the DDC is

⁶³ "Sects," Library of Congress, accessed October 03, 2022, <https://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85119451.html>

⁶⁴ Christian C. Sahner, review of *Shurāt Legends, Ibādī Identities: Martyrdom, Asceticism, and the Making of an Early Islamic Community*, by Adam R. Gaiser, *Islamic Law and Society* 27, no. 3 (2020): 290, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-00273P06>; and Karen Leonard, "American Muslims and Authority: Competing Discourses in a Non-Muslim State," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25, no. 1 (2005): 9, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27501661>.

⁶⁵ "Dewey Services," OCLC, accessed October 03, 2022, <https://www.oclc.org/en/dewey.html>

⁶⁶ Gordon Stevenson, *Andreas Schleiermacher's Bibliographic Classification and Its Relationship to the Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress Classification* (Champaign, Ill: Graduate School of Library Science, University of Illinois, 1978), 4, <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3798>.

only available through a subscription service maintained by the OCLC.

The DDC is a hierarchical system which “is expressed through structure and notation.”⁶⁷ See, for example:

200	Religion
290	Other Religions
297	Islam
297.8	Islamic Sects
297.82	Shiites

The class 297.82 ‘Shiites’ is subordinate to class 297.8 ‘Islamic Sects,’ which is subordinate to section 297 ‘Islam.’ Section 297 is part of division 290 ‘Other Religions,’ which is part of the main class 200 ‘Religion.’ The inordinate “Christian bias in the 200 Religion schedule” has already been acknowledged by a previous editor-in-chief of the DDC and need not be revisited here.⁶⁸ The full heading for the section on Islam is ‘Islam, Babism, Bahai Faith.’ This lumping together of separate religions “does a disservice both to Islam and to the Baha’i Faith.”⁶⁹

Similar to the LCSH, the DDC used the heading ‘Mohammedanism’ which was eventually replaced in 1958. It beggars belief that the DDC still uses the term ‘*Koran*’ for the sacred scripture of Islam. According to *Garner’s Modern English Usage*:

Koran; Qur’an; Quran. These English translations of the Arabic name for Islam’s holy book are phonetic. Although *Koran* long predominated in AmE [American English] and

⁶⁷ *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 4th ed. (2018), s.v. “Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC).”

⁶⁸ Joan S. Mitchell, “DDC 22: Dewey in the World, The World in Dewey,” *Advances in Knowledge Organization* 9 (2004): 139.

⁶⁹ Robinson, “Addressing Bias,” 263. See also William Collins, “The Bahá’í Faith in the Dewey Classification,” *Scriptum* 1 (1995), https://bahai.works/Scriptum/Issue_1. This brief piece provides the contextual background to the current heading and ultimately calls for “the complete movement of the Bahá’í Faith to a separate number outside of 297.”

BrE [British English], *Qur'an* and *Quran* are now predominant in World English print sources.⁷⁰

Moreover—and more importantly—the term *Koran* is “not acceptable to the libraries of Islamic countries.”⁷¹

As noted, the DDC also uses the heading sects under the hierarchy for Islam. The sixteenth edition of the *Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index* published in 1958, instructs the cataloger to classify “Sunnites, Shiites, Twelvers, Seveners, Ismailis, Ahmadiya” under ‘Sects.’⁷² This classification is as offensive to Sunnīs as it is to Shīʿīs. It seems that the editor(s) responsible for the classification did not correctly understand the ‘internal structures’ of Islam. As a consequence, this misrepresentation has continued right to the present day.⁷³ The current full heading for which both ‘Shiites’ and ‘Sunnites’ fall under is ‘Islamic sects and reform movements.’⁷⁴ Under the heading for ‘Shiites,’ the term ‘Seveners’ is synonymous with ‘Ismailites,’ which needs to be deleted.⁷⁵

The seventeenth edition of the *Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index* published in 1965 added the four aforementioned Sunni *madhhabs* under the ‘Sunnites’ heading.⁷⁶ In 2011, a DDC ‘Draft for

⁷⁰ *Garner's Modern English Usage*, 4th ed. (2016), s.v. “Koran; Qur'an; Quran.”

⁷¹ Qamar Mirza, “Islamic Subject Headings in Library of Congress Subject Headings,” *Pakistan Library Bulletin* 23, no. 2–3 (1992): 13.

⁷² Melvil Dewey, *Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index*, 16th ed. (Lake Placid Club, NY: Forest Press, 1958), 214. The decision to classify the Sunnīs as a sect is as strange as the LCSHs, considering that almost five decades had elapsed since Ignaz Goldziher wrote: “Only those groups can be regarded as real sects in Islam, whose adherents separate themselves from the *Sunna*.” Goldziher, “Mohammedan Sects,” chap. 5 in *Mohammed and Islam*, trans. Kate C. Seelye (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1917), 215. The original written in German was first published in 1910 and is indicative of the thought of his day.

⁷³ I am grateful to Violet Fox for drawing out this point, and for sharing other valuable insights, not all of which I was able to incorporate. Email message to author, March 6, 2022.

⁷⁴ See Appendix 3. I wish to thank Alex Kyrios for sharing the latest version of ‘Islamic sects and reform movements’ with me. Email message to author, March 1, 2021 and May 2, 2022.

⁷⁵ See footnote 24.

⁷⁶ Melvil Dewey, *Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index*, 17th ed. (Lake Placid Club, NY: Forest Press, 1965), 262.

Comment' stated that the four *madhhabs* are being relocated as they are "schools of law" and not "Islamic sects."⁷⁷ Neither, then are the Shiites 'sects,' or for that matter, the Sunnites. Furthermore, the hierarchy for Judaism in the seventeenth edition of the DDC contains the subdivision 'Sects and movements.' The heading for this subdivision was eventually replaced with 'Denominations and Movements.' If an exception can be made for Jewish sects, there is no reason why a similar change cannot be made for Islamic sects.⁷⁸

It will serve the DDC well to implement the suggested changes in an effort to reduce bias in the section on Islam. Some of the issues identified with the DDC are also to be found in the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) system. The LCC is a classification system initially developed for the Library of Congress, and later adopted by libraries within the United States and worldwide.⁷⁹ It comes as no surprise to briefly note that the LCC classifies 'Shiites' under 'Branches, sects, etc.'⁸⁰

Indigenous Islamic Classification Systems

The inadequacies and deficiencies of KOSs in the coverage of Islam has prompted two different types of responses. The first type of response is amendments and expansions for existing classification systems especially the DDC as it is the most extensively used system in the Muslim world.⁸¹ According to Idrees, these amendments and

⁷⁷ "Selected Topics in 297.1-.8 Islam: Draft for comment," *The Dewey Blog*, July 15, 2011, <https://ddc.typepad.com/025431/2011/07/selected-topics-in-2971-8-islam-draft-for-comment-by-august-12-2011.html>

⁷⁸ Though the term 'denomination' is an improvement over 'sects,' it is not a suitable 'fit' for Islam. See Andrews, "The Concept of Sect and Denomination in Islam," 9. See also William E. Shepard, "'Denomination' as a Label for Some Islamic Phenomena?" *Nova Religio* 6, no. 1 (2002): 155–164, <https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2002.6.1.155>.

⁷⁹ *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 4th ed. (2018), s.v. "Library of Congress Classification (LCC)."

⁸⁰ See "Class B," Library of Congress, accessed October 03, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/classification/lcco/lcco_b.pdf; and "BL-BQ Text," Library of Congress, accessed October 03, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeLCC/LCC_BL-BQ2020TEXT.pdf.

⁸¹ Idrees, "Development of a Classification Scheme," 56.

expansions can be further subdivided into two forms: “1) using the same notation of 297; and 2) alternatively using the notations for Islam that were originally designated to Christianity.”⁸²

It is of paramount interest to discover that most of these amendments and expansions use the heading ‘Islamic sects’ or its variants. These include the Shafi,⁸³ Qaisar,⁸⁴ TEBROC,⁸⁵ Aedi,⁸⁶ Gondal,⁸⁷ Riazuddin,⁸⁸ and the National Library of Indonesia (NLI)⁸⁹ classification schemes, just to cite a few.⁹⁰ The suspicion cannot be ruled out that because these catalogers are working with a preexisting system, they have inadvertently ‘inherited’ the classification bias inherent in the DDC. What can be said, with a degree of certainty, is that the heading is not of the highest concern. This may be inferred from the fact that most, if not all, of the amendments and expansions

⁸² Ibid., 56.

⁸³ Mohammad Shafi, “Expansions of Dewey Decimal Classification Relating to Oriental, Islamic and Pakistani Topics,” *Pakistan Library Review* 4, no. 1–2 (1962): 59.

⁸⁴ S. Mahmood H. Qaisar, *Islamic Sciences: Expansion of Dewey Decimal Classification Ed. XVI, for Oriental Libraries* (Aligarh: Institute of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, 1974), 21.

⁸⁵ Tehran Book Processing Centre, *Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index* (Tehran: Institute for Research and Planning in Science and Education, 1975), quoted in Mahvash K. Momeni, *Adaptations of DDC in the Middle East* (Champaign, Ill: Graduate School of Library Science, University of Illinois, 1985), 18, table 4, <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3967>.

⁸⁶ Muhammad A. Aedi, *Concise Decimal Classification for Small Libraries* [in Arabic] (Cairo: Academic Publisher, 1999), quoted in Idrees, “Development of a Classification Scheme,” 42, table 7.

⁸⁷ Hafiz M. Gondal, “Classification for Islam & Islamic Studies,” [in Urdu] (unpublished manuscript, 1999), quoted in Idrees, “Development of a Classification Scheme,” 37, table 5.

⁸⁸ Syed Riazuddin, *Classification of Islamic Literature* (Karachi: Royal Book, 2002), 63.

⁸⁹ L. Sulisty-Basuki and Alit S. Mulyani, “Indonesian Librarians’ Efforts to Adapt and Revise the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)’s Notation 297 on Islam,” *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* 13, no. 2 (2008): 98, table 4. <https://mjlis.um.edu.my/article/view/6981/4641>.

⁹⁰ See Appendix 4. For a more complete listing, see Riazuddin, *Classification of Islamic Literature*, 150–151, table 8.

changed the DDC term 'Koran' to 'Qur'ān' but left 'Islamic sects' untouched.

The second type of response is the development of independent Islamic classification systems. Examples of these are the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies and the 'Ush classification schemes.⁹¹ However, an examination of these shows that they also utilize the term sect.⁹² Even Idrees' proposed classification scheme employs the term.⁹³ It would appear that the creators of these classification schemes are influenced by the extant classification systems which use the term indiscriminately. On the whole, it seems that the sect heading is unconsciously replicated in both types of responses without an understanding of its full import.

In addition to its existence in headings, bias is also manifested in shelf location. In the LCC, DDC and certain indigenous Islamic classification schemes, materials on Shī'ism are to be found towards the end of sections on Islam. Hope A. Olson has termed this occurrence 'ghettoization' which consists of "isolating marginalized groups by concentrating them in one area."⁹⁴ It is also significant that materials on Shī'ism are shelved *after* materials on Sunnism. Shī'ism is, in effect, the 'ghetto' of Islam which further reinforces its peripheral status.

⁹¹ Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, *Library Classification Schedule on Islam and Related Subjects* (New Delhi: IIIS, 1974); and Yusuf 'Ush, *Classification of Science with Alphabetical Index* [in Arabic] (Damascus: Higaz Press, 1978), quoted in M. Solihin Arianto, "Islamic Knowledge Classification Scheme in Islamic Countries' Libraries: Challenges and Opportunities," *Al-Jami'ah* 44, no. 2 (2006): 311, table 3, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2006.442.295-323>.

⁹² There is also a scheme developed by Ziauddin Sardar that does not use the term 'sects' but uses 'minority viewpoints' instead. Sardar, *Islam: Outline of a Classification Scheme* (London: C. Bingley, 1979), 51. As rightly pointed out by Robinson, "Sardar's ... scheme privileges Sunni Islam." See, "Addressing Bias," 264. This also seems to be the situation with the majority of the indigenous Islamic classification schemes discussed herein.

⁹³ Idrees, "Development of a Classification Scheme," 196.

⁹⁴ Hope A. Olson, *The Power to Name: Locating the Limits of Subject Representation in Libraries* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002), 185, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-3435-6>.

Warrants

A consideration of warrants is of prime concern in studies on bias in KOSs. The main warrant is ‘literary warrant’⁹⁵ according to which the subject heading terms are selected from the actual literature. It is often used as a justification for the creation and retention of a heading. There exists a vast ‘body of literature’ that applies the term sect to Shī‘ism. In this sense, the term sect can be said to have literary warrant. It occurs not so much in the titles, but more so inside the texts. In fact, a cataloger will be astounded at the high frequency of its occurrence in the literature. In contrast, the term sect as applied to Sunnism does occur but far less frequently and far more selectively.⁹⁶ As one author writing on Islamic sects notes: “There seems ... to be a tacet [*sic*] agreement that the Shi’a are sectarian.”⁹⁷

There is also ‘user warrant,’ which is the selection of subject heading terms based on terminology that users will use. It is unlikely that a general user will use the term sect to find materials on Shī‘ism.⁹⁸ It is even more unlikely that a user of Shī‘ī persuasion will use the term given “that members of living religious movements may well object and seek to resist the application of the label of sect to the movement

⁹⁵ ISKO *Encyclopedia of Knowledge Organization*, s.v. “Literary warrant,” accessed October 03, 2022,

https://www.isko.org/cyclo/literary_warrant.

⁹⁶ A textbook case is a book chapter by Ronald Geaves (*see* footnote 111) published in a work of reference, unabashedly and unapologetically titled *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*. It is not the first book to associate sects with Islam in the title, and quite unfortunately, will not be the last.

⁹⁷ Sami Zubaida, “Sects in Islam,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Peter B. Clarke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 546, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588961.013.0031>. Perhaps a better term would be ‘schismatic’ rather than ‘sectarian.’

⁹⁸ Tracy Nectoux echoes this point in a more generic sense. *See* “Cults, New Religious Movements, and Bias in LC Subject Headings,” in *Radical Cataloging: Essays at the Front*, 108.

of which they are a part.”⁹⁹ Thus, the term sect has literary warrant albeit misplaced and lacks user warrant.

The question, then, that needs addressing is why does the term sect persist in studies on Shī'ism? Part of the answer lies in the fact that until recently, Western scholars who studied Shī'ism did so with a “Sunni lens.”¹⁰⁰ Simply put, Sunnism was depicted as normative whereas Shī'ism was understood to be deviative, even though the former was a much later development.¹⁰¹ The label of sect was a deliberate attempt to disparage and delegitimize the Shī'ī interpretation of Islam. The other part of the answer is that the term sect has become so embedded into the lexicon of Islamic studies that some scholars use it as a synonym for group. This may also explain the use of the term in some of the indigenous Islamic classification schemes.

Recommendations (Remedies)

There have been a number of scholars who have addressed the appropriateness of the term sect. These include Harold Barclay,¹⁰² Fuad I. Khuri,¹⁰³ Ahmed Y. Andrews,¹⁰⁴ Michael Cook,¹⁰⁵ Mark

⁹⁹ David J. Chalcrafft, “Is A Historical Comparative Sociology of (Ancient Jewish) Sects Possible?” in *Sects and Sectarianism in Jewish History*, ed. Sacha Stern (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 251–252, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004206489.i-308.65>

¹⁰⁰ Liyakat Takim, “The Study of Shi'i Islam in Western Academia,” *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2016): 17, <https://doi.org/10.1353/isl.2016.0003>. An analysis of the causes for the overall neglect of Shī'ism in Western studies is supplied by Abbas Ahmadvand, “An Iranian Point of View of Shī'ī Studies in the West,” *International Journal of Shī'ī Studies*, 5, no. 1 (2007): 6–11.

¹⁰¹ On this particular point, see W. Montgomery Watt, “The Study of the Development of the Islamic Sects,” in *Acta Orientalia Neerlandica*, ed. P. W. Pestman (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 89–91.

¹⁰² Barclay, “Sectarian Theory and the Muslim Community,” *Studies in Islam* 17, no. 3 (1980): 165–175.

¹⁰³ Khuri, *Imams and Emirs: State, Religion and Sects in Islam* (London: Saqi Books, 1990).

¹⁰⁴ Andrews, “The Concept of Sect and Denomination in Islam.”

¹⁰⁵ Cook, “Weber and Islamic Sects.”

Sedgwick,¹⁰⁶ Farhad Daftary,¹⁰⁷ Adam Gaiser,¹⁰⁸ Hussein Rashid,¹⁰⁹ Khalil Andani,¹¹⁰ and Ronald Geaves.¹¹¹ Most of these scholars concur that the term is inappropriate in an Islamic context. After all, Shī'ī Muslims do not conceive of themselves as members of a sect and the imposition of the term on a living community actually constitutes harm.

The question that now arises is what are some alternative terms that can be used in its stead. Daftary, an authority on Shī'ī and specifically Ismā'īlī studies, used to apply “the term ‘sect’ to refer to the Ismailis and other Shi'is” but now uses the more inclusive terms “‘community’ and ‘communities of interpretation’ (in the plural).”¹¹² Daftary is averse to using the term sect “to refer to a community that still exists on the contemporary scene (as opposed to those short-lived sects of mediaeval times).”¹¹³ The flexibility of the term ‘community’ allows it to be defined as simply as “a mutual sense of belonging” exists among its members.¹¹⁴

In studies on Shī'ism, some scholars have opted for the term ‘group.’ It is a neutral term bearing in mind that the most basic definition of a group is “two or more individuals who are connected by and within

¹⁰⁶ Sedgwick, “Sects in the Islamic World,” *Nova Religio* 3, no. 2 (2000): 195–240, <https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2000.3.2.195>.

See also his “Establishments and Sects in the Islamic World,” in *New Religious Movements in the Twenty First Century: Legal, Political, and Social Challenges in Global Perspective*, ed. Phillip C. Lucas and Thomas Robbins (New York: Routledge, 2004), 283–312, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203508329>.

¹⁰⁷ Omar Alī-de-Unzaga, “Introduction: A Biographical Sketch,” in *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 26.

¹⁰⁸ Gaiser, “A Narrative Identity Approach to Islamic Sectarianism.”

¹⁰⁹ Rashid, “Plural Voices in the Teaching of Islam.”

¹¹⁰ Andani, “Ismā'īliyya and Ismā'ilism: From Polemical Portrayal to Academic Inquiry,” in *Deconstructing Islamic Studies*, ed. Majid Daneshgar and Aaron W. Hughes (Boston, MA: Ilex Foundation, 2020), 283–285.

¹¹¹ Geaves, “Sectarianism in Sunnī Islam,” in *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, ed. Muhammad A. Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 25–48, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004435544_004

¹¹² Alī-de-Unzaga, “Introduction: A Biographical Sketch,” 26.

¹¹³ Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁴ For this and other aspects of a community, see Edmund Hayes, “The Institutions of the Shī'ī Imāmate: Towards a Social History of Early Imāmī Shī'ism,” *Al-Masāq* 33, no. 2 (2021), 190–191, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2021.1907520>.

social relationships.”¹¹⁵ Thus, replacing the term ‘Islamic sects’ with either ‘Islamic communities’ or ‘Islamic groups,’ will evenly account for all the entities that fall under the ‘sect’ heading in all of the KOSs discussed. It will also evenly account for all the entities that fall under the heading ‘Shī'ism’ within each KOS. It must be made clear that all entities include all sects, whether they be medieval or modern.

Conclusion

As a contribution to radical cataloging analyses of bias in KOSs, this paper demonstrates that the term sect as applied to Shī'ism along with other Muslim groups, is both discriminatory and disparaging. Furthermore, it ought to be immediately replaced in the LCSH/LCC, DDC and indigenous Islamic classification systems. It is not within the purview of this paper to opine on which type of response is most effective concerning the last-mentioned systems, except to note that just because the schemes are ‘Islamic’ does not exonerate their classification biases. Libraries that implement Islamic schemes, as well as the LCSH/LCC and DDC, need to be cognizant of the pejorative connotations and implications of the term sect and must use alternative terms in the endeavor to ensure fair and unbiased access for all users. It is envisaged that others outside of the LIS field will also take heed of the recommendations advanced above, thereby enabling the erasure of the term from academic usage and popular parlance.

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¹¹⁵ Donelson R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 7th ed. (Boston, MA: Cengage, 2017), 3.

Appendix 1: Current LCSH Heading for ‘Islamic sects.’

Islamic sects

UF	Islam--Sects Muslim sects Sects, Islamic Sects, Muslim
BT	Sects
RT	Islamic heresies
NT	Ahl-i Hadīth Ahmadiyya Asharites Assassins (Ismailites) Azraqites Badawīyah Bektashi Dīn-i Ilāhī Druzes Farā'izīyah Hanafites Hanbalites Ḥashwīya Ibadites Jadidism Jahmīyah Karmathians Karramites Kharijites Mahdawīyah Malikites Motazilites Mu'aṭṭilah Murīdīyah Murji'ah Salafīyah Sālimīyah Shabak Shafiites Shī'ah

Sunnites
Wahhābīyah
Zikrī
Zahirites

UF: Used For
BT: Broader Term
RT: Related Term
NT: Narrower Term

Adapted from the 44th edition of the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). See “Islamic sects,” Library of Congress, accessed October 03, 2022, <https://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85068480.html>; and “Islamic sects,” [Page 1-247] Library of Congress Subject Headings PDF Files, accessed October 03, 2022, <https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeLCSH/I.pdf>

Appendix 2: Current LCSH Heading for ‘Shī‘ah.’

Shī‘ah

UF	Imamites Shia Shiism Twelvers (Islam)
BT	Islamic sects
RT	Alids
NT	Ahl-i Ḥaqq Akḥbārīyah Alevis Batinites Hurufis Imams (Shiites) Ismailites Kaysānīyah Nosairians Nuṣṭavīyah Shaykhī Uṣūlīyah Zaydīyah

UF: Used For

BT: Broader Term

RT: Related Term

NT: Narrower Term

Adapted from the 44th edition of the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). See “Shī‘ah,” Library of Congress, accessed October 03, 2022,

<https://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85121390.html>; and
 “Shī‘ah,” [Page S-317] Library of Congress Subject Headings PDF
 Files, accessed October 03, 2022,
<https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeLCSH/S.pdf>

Appendix 3: DDC Current Hierarchy for 'Islamic sects.'

297

- .8 Islamic Sects and Reform Movements
 - .81 Sunnites
 - .814 Wahhābīyah
 - .82 Shiites
 - .821 Twelvers (Ithna Asharites)
 - .822 Seveners (Ismailites)
 - Including Mustalians, Nizaris
 - .824 Zaydites
 - .825 'Alawīs and Alevis
 - .825 1 'Alawīs (Alawites)
 - .825 2 Alevis
 - .83 Other sects and reform movements
 - Including Kharijites
 - .833 Ibadites
 - .834 Motazilites
 - .835 Kadarites
 - .837 Murjiites
 - .85 Druzes
 - .86 Ahmadiyya movement
 - .87 Black Muslim movement

Adapted from "Islamic sects and reform movements." Alex Kyrios, email message to author, March 1, 2021 and May 2, 2022.

Appendix 4: The Sect Heading in Selected Indigenous Islamic Classification Schemes

Scheme	Year	Class No.	Heading
Shafi	1962	297.8	Islamic Sects
Qaisar	1974	297.8	Sects
TEBROC	1975	297.5	Islamic Sects & Religions
Aaedi	1999	240	Islamic Principles ... Sects
Gondal	1999	260	Beliefs & sects
Riazuddin	2002	297.6	Muslim Sects
National Library of Indonesia (NLI)	2005	297.8	Movements and Sects

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From the Catalog Cards to the Cloud: Transforming the Near East Collections for Discovery and Access

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MOURADIAN, HUDA DAYTON**

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Joan Weeks

Head, Near East Section and Turkic World Area Specialist

50 years for MELA and 77 Years for the Near East Section



Figure 1 Staff of the Orientalia Division

As MELA is commemorating its 50th Anniversary, the Near East Section (NES) of the African and Middle Eastern Division (AMED) in the Library of Congress is celebrating its 77th Anniversary. NES was created in 1945 as part of the Orientalia Division following the allied victory in World War II. The war had raised interest in the lands and peoples of the Middle East and demonstrated the extensive need for knowledge of this region.

The Near East section was given custody of materials in over 40 vernacular languages that includes the countries and peoples of North

Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The main linguistic groupings are Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Armenian, Georgian, Central Asian Turkic and Iranic languages.

By 1951, the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council recognized the problems that were emerging with Middle East studies particularly with the large numbers of materials that were needed in libraries, the disorganization of book vendors throughout the region and the staff that were unfamiliar with the languages. In 1954 Dwight Eisenhower signed the agricultural trade development and assistance act known as PL 480 Food for Peace that enabled food deficit friendly countries to purchase US agricultural surplus with the local commodity currency and then the U.S. used these currencies to pay for economic development projects. In 1958, the Dingell Amendment provided for the procurement of a range of scholarly publications using local currencies derived from the sale of agricultural surpluses, and the Library of Congress was designated to serve as an agent. A total of \$84,000 was allocated to procure and dispatch all of the publications of the Indian government to three research institutions in the United States: the University of Pennsylvania, the Midwest Inter-Library Center in Chicago and the University of California. In August 1961, Congress approved the program's acquisition of publications from India, Pakistan and the United Arab Republic for the Library of Congress and universities that accepted its invitation to participate at a \$500 annual fee.¹¹⁶

In 1961, the Library of Congress began recruiting staff and working on arrangements with the American embassies, and by 1962 the first shipments went out from the field offices in India and Pakistan. The Library of Congress also established the Cairo office which now functions as the regional center for processing materials acquired from all the countries in the region of the Middle East and North Africa. These materials came into the Library and were centrally cataloged on cards through 1997, and these cards are still in use today.

¹¹⁶ *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Aug., 1969), pp. 743-754



Figure 2 Cards in AMED conversion to MARC

Machine-readable cataloging (MARC) records became available in the 1980s and the cards in the languages using Roman scripts were converted to the online cataloging system by a contractor, but the cards in the non-Roman scripts were not converted. In a cleanup project started in August 2021, over 33,452 Arabic monographs on the Near East decks have been given full cataloging processing to include holdings and

item records with barcode pen and linking. In this project many monographs prior to 1980, without MARC bibliographic records, have been sent for full cataloging. In 2007, catalogers were able to start entering vernacular scripts into the catalog records in the title, author, publisher, and edition fields which made them searchable using Arabic and Persian scripts.

2016 to 2022 were excellent years for processing the backlog of bundles of newspapers on the decks. The Middle East South Asia (MESA) cataloging section provided microfilm bibliographic records and these bundles were converted to reels of microfilm. As they came back to the Near East Section, the Library technician put holdings and item statements in the records associated with those microfilm reels so that researchers now see the holding statements on the records, and they really appreciate knowing this information about newspaper holdings prior to coming in for their research.

CALL NUMBER	AMED/Nes Microfilm 17035 Set 1 AMED Np 3739
Request in	African & Middle Eastern Reading Room (Jefferson, LJ229)
Older receipts	1982:May 19-1998:Dec.30

Figure 3 Newspaper holdings in LOC public catalog

Storing the monographs on the decks has been a huge challenge with severe overcrowding. In 2017, the Near East Section started to send monographs offsite to Cabin Branch and Fort Meade in Maryland. The holdings record says “stored offsite” and it takes up to two days for these to come back onsite for the researchers. At present, area specialists still need to request them manually, but it is hoped that researchers will soon be able to request materials in an automated call slip system.

From 2015 onward, Near East staff have opened and processed holdings and records for over 1200 bundles and boxes of bound periodicals in arrearage on the deck, while the MESA cataloging section has processed the periodicals arriving after 2015. To date, 56,000 bound periodical volumes have been fully processed and labeled, and they are now available on the shelves for researchers to discover.



Figure 4 Bound periodicals prior to 2015



Figure 5 Bound periodicals presently

Other major projects involve digitizing the Near East collections from the cards into the cloud. Many are described in detail throughout this article, but one highlight is the Arabic, Persian and Ottoman calligraphy sheet collection which was recently uploaded on the Library of Congress external website.

There are freely accessible Middle East electronic resources on the LOC website at: <https://eresources.loc.gov>. Other electronic resources are restricted to onsite use only, and this is the case with the newly received print newspapers from the Middle East that are now sent to be digitized. The catalogers create electronic bibliographic records and add holdings data after the materials are digitized, but there is limited onsite access to the digitized newspapers since they are under copyright.

Muhannad Salhi, Ph.D.

Arab World Area Specialist Arabic Rare Collections

The Arabic rare collections can be combined into various sections: calligraphy sheets, manuscripts, and lithographs. The calligraphy sheets, of which there are about 273 items entirely in the Arabic script, have all been digitized and are available to patrons online. The majority of these sheets are in Arabic and are mostly Qur'anic, but they also include many items in Persian and Ottoman Turkish. The collection begins with a calligraphy sheet which aptly states: "*Man kataba Bism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim bi-husn khatt dakhal al-Jannah bidun hisab*," roughly translated as "whomsoever writes *Bism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim* (in the name of God, most Gracious and most Merciful) in a beautiful hand enters paradise with no account or judgement). This is a clear statement about the importance of calligraphy and its beauty in Islamic culture. The statement *Bism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim*, commonly known as the "bismillah," is one which all Muslims are supposed to make when beginning any endeavor – including the recitation of the Qur'an – as a means of soliciting the Divine's pleasure and blessing, thus ensuring its success.

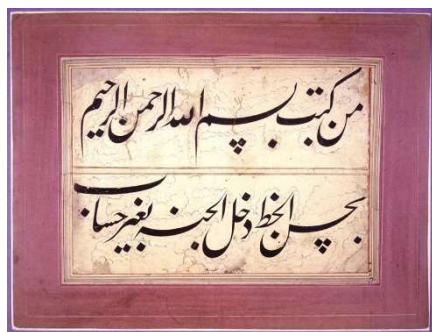


Figure 6 Muzaffar 'Ali Levha 18th-19th centuries "Whoever writes the bismillah

A fair portion of the Arabic manuscript collection contains religious texts, including Qur'ans, books and commentaries on the Hadith (the Prophetic traditions), and works on the subjects of Islamic philosophy and jurisprudence, among others. The bulk of our Arabic manuscripts (1500 out of 2500) come from the collection of an Azhari scholar by the name of

al-Imam al-Mansuri. When Mansuri died, his beneficiaries sought to sell his collection, and the Library of Congress decided to purchase it in its entirety around 1945. The collection also includes some 4500 lithographs which are primarily religiously based but also include a wide variety of topics. The Mansuri collection, along with the rest of the Arabic manuscripts, is currently part of an ongoing digitization project which will make them digitally available to all our patrons.

One favorite is an illuminated manuscript entitled *Dala'il al-Khayrat* (Waymarks to Benefits), written by the Moroccan mystic al-Jazuli (d. 1465), which includes a beautiful illustration of Mecca and Medina. The book itself is a series of prayers, praises, and supplications directed towards the Prophet Muhammad. This includes a list of the 99 names of Muhammad, something less commonly known among Muslims. As such, it was one of the very first works of a genre that focuses primarily on the person of the Prophet himself, rather than simply on the glory of God.

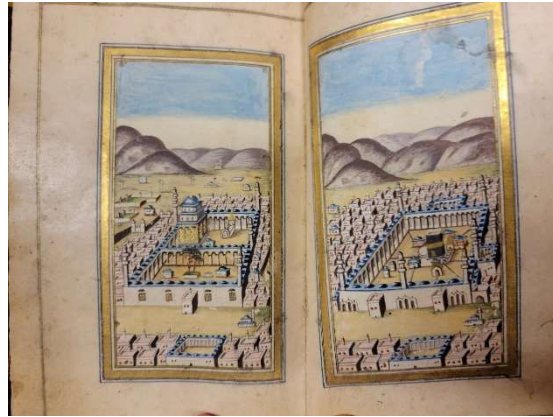


Figure 7 *Dala'il al-Khayrat* (Waymarks to Benefits) with Mecca and the Ka'ba displayed.

Figure 8 *Suwar al-Kawakib* (book of The Constellations of Fixed Stars) by al-Sufi (903-986 CE)



In addition to religious works, the Arabic manuscript collection includes works on the sciences, treating astronomy, medicine, geography, history, Arabic grammar, and the nautical sciences, among others. One of the most beautiful astrological manuscripts in the collection is a work called *Suwar al-Kawakib* (book of The Constellations of Fixed Stars) by al-Sufi (903-986 CE). A polymath,

Sufi's work contains numerous beautiful illustrations of the stars and constellations as well as his mathematical calculations, which are quite accurate even by today's standards.

Another historical/geographical work is that of Ibn al-Wardi (d. 1457) by the name of *Kharidat al-'Aja'ib* (the Pearl of Wonders) which, while meant to be a serious work, provides a quite entertaining read by today's standards. One of the most prominent features of the work is an illustrated map, clearly reflecting the cartographic style of the time, in which Mecca and Medina figure prominently in the center of the world. The map also includes some amusing locations such as the "Devil's Throne" and the "Sea of Nymphs."



Figure 9 *Kharidat al-'Aja'ib* (the Pearl of Wonders) with an illustrated map in which Mecca and Medina figure prominently in the center of the world.

As previously mentioned, all our Arabic manuscripts (and lithographs soon to follow) are in the process of digitization: a long and laborious process which I have, perhaps foolishly, taken on. Following the cataloging of the manuscripts, which consists in moving back and forth constantly between Excel sheets and the catalog, the digitization process is finally underway—again involving the logging in of

manuscripts and at this juncture running back and forth between that and the Scan Lab. Once this project is completed, I am hoping to continue with the digitization of the Arabic lithograph collection: some 4500-5000 items which are currently in the process of being cataloged. The final goal is not only to preserve many of these fragile items digitally, but also to make them available online to all who desire to view and study them.

Hirad Dinavari
Iranian World Reference Specialist

The Iranica Collections at the Near East Section: Expanding beyond the Persian Collection to Include all Iranic Languages

Building on the theme of the panel, “From the Card Catalog to the Cloud,” we now focus on the Iranica collections and discuss how they went from the Persian collection in the card catalog to the various digitized online collections we have today. However, let us first discuss the institutional history of the Iranic world at the Library. As previous speakers have highlighted, individual librarians who began developing collections played a role in establishing the path for future librarians to build on. The noteworthy individual who shaped the Near East Section collections, and especially the Persian collections, was Mr. Ibrahim Pourhadi. He was one of the first Near East Section librarians and served for over 50 years, building not just on the Persian collections, but initially on all of the non-Arab Near East collections as well, including Turkish and Armenian.

When the Near East Section was created, Mr. Pourhadi was tasked with primarily working on the Persian collections. By the end of his career he had authored two publications focusing on the Library’s collections: *Persian and Afghan Newspapers in the Library of Congress, 1871-1978*, (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 1979); and *Calendar Conversion Tables: Hijri Shamsi (solar)-Hijri Qamari (lunar) to A.D. Gregorian*, (Bethesda, MD: Foundation for Iranian Studies, 1991). These publications were produced to help researchers

with converting various Islamic calendars to the Gregorian calendar as well as to create a handlist of the Persian language newspaper collections at the Library of Congress. With the passage of time the responsibilities for the Near East Section librarians evolved and expanded to include larger language families, hence the Persian collection was broadened to include all Iranica languages, including the various dialects of Kurdish such as Kurmanji, Sorani, Gorani and Zaza; as well as Persian from various countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and adjacent regions in Central and South Asia. Other major languages include Pashto and Baluchi, which are also spoken in a number of countries in the region.

The largest collection in the Iranian World collections at the Library of Congress is the Persian collection. Although the terms “Farsi,” “Dari,” and “Tajiki” are commonly used to refer to the language as a consequence of its regional and nationalistic politicization, the Library of Congress uses the English term, “Persian,” to capture all of these regional variants.

Starting in 2004, with my arrival, the Library began to host a number of lectures focusing on Persianate and Iranica-related topics. We currently have over 60 lectures available online under the title “Persian Book Lecture Series” for the public to review. Also by the early 2000s, the Near East Section had started to work on digitization projects, which included Islamic calligraphy collections, photographic collections such as the Afghanistan Album, and eventually the World Digital Library (WDL) project that focused on Afghanistan, sponsored by the Carnegie Institute with the support of UNESCO. The WDL project not only digitized materials about Afghanistan in Persian and Pashto but included materials in Arabic, Russian, French, German and English. Currently the project has been fully transferred to the Library of Congress and is available as part of the online digital collections for researchers to use.

Other major endeavors included exhibitions undertaken with the support of the former chief of the African and Middle Eastern Division, Mary-Jane Deeb, Ph.D. The Near East Section worked on two exhibitions focusing on Afghanistan and the Persian language. The exhibition “Voices from Afghanistan,” cohosted jointly with

Radio Free Europe, showcased letters sent to Radio Azadi in Pashto and Persian over the years.

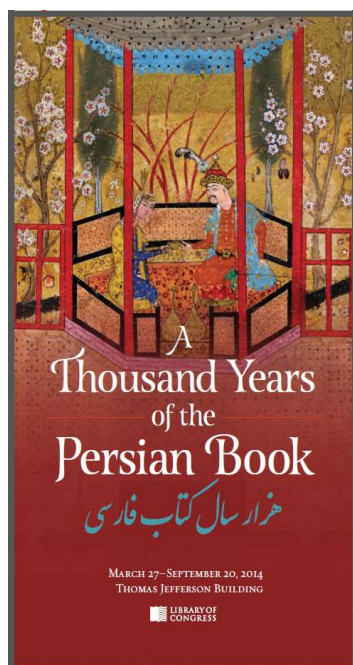


Figure 10 Official Announcement for the exhibition, A Thousand Years of the Persian Book, 2014

The 2014 exhibition “A Thousand Years of the Persian Book,” which was featured for a six-month period, included a lecture series cohosted with the Roshan Center for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland with funds raised through donations from an Iranian-American civic organization, the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA). The exhibition featured 75 items: roughly half from Iran, but with the other half of the Persian items coming from India, Central Asia, Afghanistan and beyond.

In the first phase of the project, 155 manuscripts were digitized; currently all 175 manuscripts have been digitized, and we are working on the more than 600 Persian lithographic titles. In the final phase to come, the roughly 200 early-imprint titles will be digitized. At present, a total of nearly 350 titles are fully digitized and available for research.

I have also worked collaboratively with the Islamabad field office and the Asian Division staff on various thematic Web-Archiving projects, focusing on Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan and Pakistan. The topics have covered elections, official governmental and non-governmental websites; and we have one that is now being crawled that centers on gender issues and women.

Lastly, looking at the four major Iranic languages that are in focus here, there are currently roughly 1000 records of Baluchi language

titles, 9000 records of Kurdish language titles, and 7000 records of Pashto language titles in our system. As we enhance holdings records and update our cataloging for these collections and especially the Persian collection, the roughly 90,000 records for Persian/Tajiki language items is poised to increase in the near future. The Iranica Collections and various language sub-collections are growing, and more treasures are being digitized for patrons and researchers to use.

Joan Weeks**Head, Near East Section and Turkic World Area Specialist****Ottoman and Modern Turkish Collections**

The Near East Section Turkish Collections are divided into Ottoman Turkish (Turkish written in Arabic Script) and, after 1927, Modern Turkish (written in a Romanized alphabet). Looking back 77 years to the founding of the section isn't enough to discover one of the earliest Ottoman acquisitions – Abdul-Hamid II's gift of over 330 volumes with Monaco-red binding and a gold inscription that reads: "Gift made by H.I. M. the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II to the national library of the United States of America through the Honorable A.S. Hewitt member of the House of Representatives in Washington A.H.1302-1884 A.D." How would the Sultan have given these books to the Library of Congress in 1884 through a Member of Congress from New York? The remarkable story of how the Sultan met and befriended Abram Stevens Hewitt was reported in the New York Tribune (July 13, 1884). It turns out that Abram Hewitt was touring Yildiz Palace in 1884 when his young son fainted and was taken to a guard house. Two other little boys saw this child inside and reported it back to their father who happened to be the Sultan. He sent his emissaries to Hewitt's hotel to inquire about his son's well-being and to request that he and his son visit the palace the next day.

During the visit, the Sultan noticed Hewitt's indelible pencil and special cigarettes which resulted in a gift shipment to Abdul-Hamid II when Hewitt returned home. Shortly thereafter, Hewitt received a notice that he had received a shipment of Ottoman books. He wrote

back to the Sultan that he didn't deserve such an honor and that the Sultan should give the books to the Library of Congress. The Sultan agreed and had the special collection prepared for the Library and invited Hewitt to keep the first set for himself. Hewitt's set is now in New York University's Elmer Holmes Bobst Library. The Sultan's gift to the Library of Congress was kept in the U.S. Capitol, where the Library was originally located, until the Jefferson Building was completed and the gift could be unpacked and shelved.

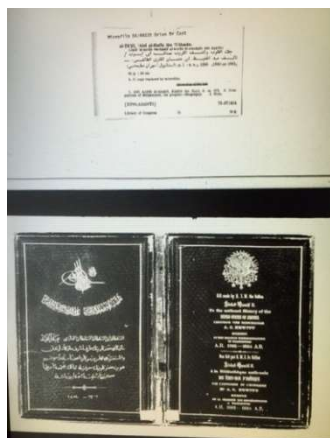


Figure 11 Catalog card at the top of the reel of microfilm with the Abdul-Hamid II book

In 1987, the Abdul-Hamid II gift books were in deteriorating condition. They were microfilmed, and catalog cards were put at the top of the reel of microfilm followed by four to seven books on each reel. In 2015, it was difficult to know what book was on which reel; and so, a volunteer set up a spreadsheet and went through the reels and identified the titles, authors, and reel numbers for each book. Yet the books were still very difficult to use on microfilm, and so a digitization proposal was put forth and approved. A pilot project to digitize microfilm had just been implemented and the microfilm reels were an ideal candidate for digitization.

There was a huge problem with metadata for the collection, however. How are you going to obtain over 300 cataloging records from microfilm cards? Fortunately, Guy Burak, cataloger at New York University (NYU), had cataloged Hewitt's collection of Abdul Hamid books that had been donated to the university, and so his metadata was ingested and matched to the Library of Congress collection. Some of the 33 missing records were found in OCLC, and seven titles without records were printed out with a number of pages and the cards. Alan Maberry, the Ottoman Cataloger, was able to create the remaining records.



Figure 12 The 27 extant books were on acid paper with some broken pieces. Another volunteer put the pieces together in mylar and then they could be scanned.

The single largest component of the Ottoman Collections at the Library is the Karl Süssheim Collection of 2,512 cataloged works, including books, pamphlets, and bound periodicals. Additionally, there are 11 banker's boxes with correspondence, photographs, notebooks, and clipped articles from various publications, as well as his personal diary covering 1903-1908. This collection was sold to Yale University in 1949. Yale University Library gifted the Süssheim Collection to the Library of Congress in March 1992. Alan Maberry fully cataloged this collection, and with the Ottoman Collections at the Library of Congress research guide (<https://guides.loc.gov/ottoman-turkish>) researchers can discover the full extent of the Ottoman collections.

The Library of Congress Cairo office is the major provider for the Turkish collections. There are currently 58,000 monograph titles stored offsite, and this doesn't include multi volumes or the bound periodicals stored onsite. The Turkish collections have the same problem as the Arabic and Persian with the lack of full cataloging for the works on the shelves prior to 1980, but there is a project underway to provide holdings and item records with barcode and full cataloging for books without bibliographic records. Most of the bound Turkish periodicals have holdings and item records. The Library also collects Central Asian Turkic monographs, bound periodicals and microfilmed newspapers. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan account for the largest number of titles, with 4077 and 2552 respectively.



Figure 13 Hand carved model of Khiva

The Library not only receives special gift donations of books, but also very unique handcrafted art objects. The mayor of Khiva, Uzbekistan came to the Library of Congress to present a hand-carved model of his ancient city, along with books describing its artwork.

A significant ongoing project for the Near East Section is web archiving, and most recently the focus was on capturing governmental, Red Crescent and major news outlets covering COVID-19 in the Turkic countries.

Also, in collaboration with the Cairo and Islamabad Overseas Offices, the Near East Section is archiving Turkish and Central Asian Turkic governmental and non-governmental sites.

**Khatchig Mouradian, Ph.D.
Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist**

From Illumination to Digitization: The Armenian and Georgian Collections at the Library of Congress

The Library of Congress's Armenian and Georgian collections have grown significantly over the decades, thanks to the Library's acquisitions as well as donations of books and manuscripts. The Committee for the Armenian Collection of the Library of Congress, spearheaded by Arthur Hampar Dadian, launched one of the earliest initiatives to enrich the Armenian materials at the Library in the mid-1940s. Decades later, the Armenian collections and programming at the Library received another significant boost with endowments from Artur Dadian's (1991) and his wife Marjorie Dadian's (1995) estates.

During the period of Dr. Levon Avdoyan's tenure as the Armenian and Georgian specialist from the early 1990s up to his retirement in 2018, the growth of the Armenian collection in the Library's African

and Middle Eastern Division was accompanied by several other initiatives. In 2012, a major exhibit was held at the Library titled "To Know Wisdom and Instruction": The Armenian Literary Tradition at the Library of Congress. The Division's annual Vartanants Day Armenian Lecture, the longest-running lecture series at the Library, was launched in 1994, and continues to this day. The latest iteration was a virtual event in 2022 featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Peter Balakian.

The Armenian and Georgian collections received a major boost in 2021-2022 with thousands of books in large and small donations arriving at the Library. In November 2022, the African and Middle Eastern Division accepted one of the largest gift collections of books that it has received in decades. The collection comprises some 30 boxes of Armenian monographs and periodicals—alongside separately transported rare items—selected from late writer Antranig Poladian's vast library of more than 6,000 Armenian volumes. The books and periodicals further enrich the collection of Armenian materials at the Library of Congress. Mostly from the 19th and early 20th centuries, these items will be cataloged under the "Antranig Poladian Collection." University students volunteering for the Library helped prepare detailed lists of all the books and checked for duplicates, and another student will help with the cataloging. Also in 2022, John Dadian donated some 50 Georgian books to the Division.

Over the past two years, several manuscripts and books in Armenian have been digitized. They have been added to the Armenian Rarities Collection: some 60 Armenian and Georgian manuscripts and rare books, Bibles, prayer scrolls, and volumes on geography, history, and language; all of which are fully digitized and available for use. Among these items is a 14th century Gospel Book, the first printed Armenian bible published in Amsterdam in 1666, a palmistry manual from 1834, and a book on protection from fire printed in 1831.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ The collection is featured online at:
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/armenian-rarities/>



Figure 14 From the *Armenian Rarities Collection: An Armenian Gospel Book*, Jerusalem, 1321.

Among the recently-digitized manuscripts is the Library's smallest Armenian Four Gospels (9.8x7.5cm).¹¹⁸ According to inscriptions—and the heavy scars of water and fire damage on the manuscript—the codex had an arduous journey through the centuries in the Armenian highlands and the South Caucasus. An unknown scribe completed the Four Gospels within a year (1683-1684) in the St. Stephen monastery in Syunik. During the 18th century it was acquired by a priest, then “fell captive” to invaders, only to be later “rescued” and given to an

Armenian church (Holy Mother of God) in the Goghtn region. We learn from another inscription a century later that in 1883 the manuscript was gifted to the Saint John the Baptist Armenian Church in the town of Shushi.

Although many of the digitized items are religion-themed, there are important exceptions. Below are several examples: An Armenian palmistry manuscript compiled by Avedis Berberian in Constantinople in 1834. Berberian refers to it as “the prestigious art of palmistry” in the introduction, making the case for chiromancy as a beneficial form of knowledge worthy of glorification, all the while chastising its detractors. The illustrated text, based on works by Hellenic authors, comprises two sections: The first explains the segments of the hand and identifies the mounts, plains, and lines; and the second delves into interpreting them.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ The digital version of the manuscript is available online at: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2022403317>

¹¹⁹ The fully digitized manuscript can be accessed at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/amedscd.2016452569>

Best known for inspiring the story of Frankenstein, Italian physicist Giovanni Aldini also developed methods for protecting humans from fire. In 1831, the Armenian Mkhitarist Congregation in Venice published an illustrated booklet about “Knight Altini’s invention protecting one from harm during a fire.” (The Emperor of Austria had knighted Aldini for his contributions.) The booklet’s opening page emphasizes that the information may prove useful to inhabitants of mostly wooden-built Istanbul. The Ottoman metropolis, notorious for its fires, was an important market for Armenian books the Congregation published.¹²⁰



Figure 15 Armenian palmistry manuscript, Constantinople, 1834.

The Library of Congress’s African and Middle Eastern Division is home to the earliest Georgian-language books printed from moveable type: *Dittionario giorgiano e italiano* (Georgian-Italian Dictionary) and *Alphabetum Ibericum sive Georgianum cum Oratione* (Iberian or Georgian Alphabet with Prayers), both published in 1629. The former offers a foundation in the Georgian language, while the latter presents prayer texts such as the Lord’s Prayer and Ave Maria in Georgian.¹²¹

¹²⁰ The fully digitized manuscript can be accessed here:
<https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/amedscd.2016403739>

¹²¹ Below are the links to these items:

Dictionary: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/amedscd.2007552045>

Prayers: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/amedscd.2007553496>



Figure 16 A page from "Knight Altini's invention protecting one from harm during a fire," Venice, 1831.

The Division has also fostered scholarly research on Armenian manuscripts in recent years. For example, we knew little about the genesis and journey of a 17th-century illumination depicting the Adoration of the Magi from the Library's rich collection of Armenian materials through the centuries. This changed last summer, when scholar Whitney Adana Kite (Columbia University), serving as Lily Residential Fellow in the African and Middle Eastern Division (AMED), reconstructed key details related to its production and provenance.¹²²

While the overwhelming majority of the Library's 45,000+ Armenian items and thousands of Georgian items are housed in the African and Middle

Eastern Division, other divisions also feature important Armenian and Georgian items: The Geography & Map Division recently digitized two Armenian-language maps of Africa and Europe from the 18th century, completing the 4-map set that also includes Asia and America. The maps were produced during an era scholars consider to be the golden age of Armenian cartography. Engraved by Elia Endasian at the San Lazzaro degli Armeni Monastery in Venice, the maps reflect both the knowledge of the period's European cartographers and the ways in which they conveyed it (including pictorial representation of points of interest). Predictably, the map of Europe and, to a lesser extent, Asia, are more accurate. The maps are featured in the Armenian Rarities Collection.

¹²² For details about the manuscript, see Ms. Kite's lecture, "Morphing Magi: An Armenian Menologium in Context": <https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-10459>

Huda Dayton
Arab World Reference Librarian

Arabic Modern Collections

In the Near East Section (NES), the Arabic collection is divided into two separate categories: the Arabic Modern Collection and the Arabic Rare Collection. They differ in terms of the features and purposes that they serve.

The Arabic Modern Collection is a comprehensive collection that covers a wide range of subjects. There is a portion of the collection that is available for circulation and can be borrowed through interlibrary loan. While the Library has closed stacks, the public has access to this collection in the Reading Room upon request. As for the Arabic Rare Collection, it has a narrower range of subject matter with limited access, and it is not circulated outside the Library.

In addition, the Library holds collections of Arabic photographs and maps that are housed in the Prints and Photographs Division and the Maps Division, as both maintain custody of these materials.

Among the Near East Section's collections, the Arabic-language collection is the largest in terms of collection volumes. There are a few major components of its Arabic Modern Collection: monographs, which contain works from 22 Arab nations; serials, which contain microfilms of newspapers; and finally, hardcopy bound journals. More than 3500 active subscriptions are in place for the serials. This collection of modern materials comprises a broad range of subject areas. For instance, there are numerous collections of non-fiction monographs that cover a wide range of topics. The religion collection is an example of this. In the area of Islamic studies and interpretations of the Qur'an, NES has extensive holdings.

Throughout Islamic history, there have been numerous commentaries and interpretations of the Qur'an that were written by Muslim scholars during different periods. In the NES collection, there are a variety of sub-genres of such interpretation, comprising literary, jurisprudential, Sufi, and rhetorical approaches. Examples of specific works include the interpretations of Al Qadi Ayyadh, Ibn Arabi, and Ibn Ajebah.



Figure 18 *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr- al-Ṭabarānī*

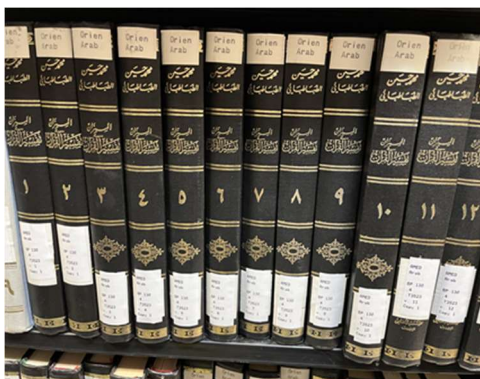


Figure 19 *Al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān- al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī*

Additionally, NES holds a large collection of Quranic interpretations and jurisprudential studies pertaining to non-Sunni Islamic sects – among them the Shi'i, Ibadhi, Mu'tazili and others – as well as a large collection of books on Islam in general.

There are several non-Sunni works on the interpretation of the Qur'an, such as *Al-Mizan fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an* by Al-Tabatabaei, and the *Mawsu'at al-Fiqh al-Ibadi* (The Encyclopedia of Ibadhi Jurisprudence), among others.

Moreover, as one of the most substantial centers for Islamic materials, NES contains a comprehensive collection of Islamic jurisprudence based on Hadith, with works pertaining to Sunnis, Shi'is, and Bahais. Besides the six main books of Hadith in the Sunnah, there are many Shiite and Ibadiya works and a variety of prayer books and other resources that are relevant to the Christian and Jewish faiths, including the Coptic Orthodox Bible.



Figure 20 Books for children among a large collection

NES has a significant collection of Arabic dictionaries available, as a resource for linguists, which serve as a valuable reference for the study of the language. An example of an early dictionary is a copy of *Kitab al-'Ayn* compiled by Khalīl ibn Aḥmad. Further, there are a variety of lexicons in both Arabic and English.

There is a large collection of fiction works with titles from every Arab country, including some works that were among the first Arabic novels to

be published in Arab countries during the past century. Examples of early novels that have been published in Arabic include:

Syria-Egypt: Ghādah al-zāhirah: Zaynab Fawwāz, 1899

Lebanon-Syria: Ghābat al-ḥaqq : Faransīs Faṭḥ Allāh Marrāsh

Egypt: the works of Najib Mahfouz and Taha Husain

Zaynab./Haykal, Muḥammad Ḥusayn, 1914

NES also maintains a large collection of children's books that are used for research and in education. The collection consists of books and publications from across the Arab world dating from the 1960s to the present. Some researchers compare the content of children's books published in the 60s with those published today.



Figure 21 *Bint Al-Nil*, an Arabic women's magazine launched in 1945

As for the collection of serials, NES maintains over 3,500 active commercial serial journal titles and newspaper subscriptions. Most journals are not digitized and are housed in bound volumes, whereas the newspapers are microfilmed. In AMED's reading room, there are microfilm readers that allow users to access newspapers in Arabic and Middle Eastern languages.

Among the hardcopy serial journals is a wide collection from the 1930s and 1940s that is available for research. In NES, there are copies from 1951-57 of *Bint Al-Nil*, an Arabic women's magazine launched in 1945, founded by Doria Shafik (1908 - 1975), one of the key figures in the Egyptian women's liberation movement at that time.

Another valuable Arabic journal is *al-Dad*, a literary and social journal published in Aleppo. This journal published works by prominent Arab writers and poets for more than eighty years, in the period between 1931 and 2020.



Figure 22 Al-Dad, a literary and social Arabic journal

In conclusion, this article has offered a brief overview of the Arabic Modern Collection that is housed in the Near East Section at the Library of Congress. The Arabic collections are constantly being expanded and developed to meet the needs of the public and academia. As Ranganathan stated in the Fifth Law of Librarianship, “The library is a growing organism.”

Light Shone on a Hidden Collection:
A Collaborative Project to Catalog Yale's Turkish MSS¹²³

ÖZGEN FELEK, AGNIESZKA REC, AYŞE ÇİÇEK ÜNAL¹²⁴

YALE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

In September 2022, an innovative collaboration between Yale librarians and faculty was initiated officially to design a cataloging workflow and to hire and train a graduate student to create original catalog records for the “hidden collection” of manuscripts in Ottoman Turkish held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. At Roberta L. Dougherty’s suggestion, project participants Özgen Felek, Agnieszka Rec, and Ayşe Çiçek Ünal presented a report from the project’s early stages at the annual MELA meeting. These presentations detailed the project’s birth, development, and initial impact. Özgen Felek offered an overview of Beinecke’s Islamic manuscript collections, as well as her work teaching from the Turkish collections and advocating for their cataloging. Agnieszka Rec continued the planning story from Beinecke’s side and discussed how she and the team created templates and set cataloging priorities. Ayşe Çiçek Ünal described her training, the pedagogical impact of the project, and the challenges of cataloging

¹²³ This article is a revised combination of the talks by Özgen Felek, Agnieszka Rec, and Ayşe Çiçek Ünal at the panel titled, “Light Shone on a Hidden Collection: A Collaborative Project to Catalog Yale’s Turkish MSS,” Middle East Librarians Association Conference, University of Denver, 29 November 2022.

¹²⁴ Özgen Felek, PhD, (ozgen.felek@yale.edu) is the Lector of Ottoman in Near Eastern Languages & Literatures at Yale University. Agnieszka Rec, PhD, (agnieszka.rec@yale.edu) is an Early Materials Cataloger at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Ayşe Çiçek Ünal (ayse.cicekun@yale.edu) is a PhD student in Ottoman History at Yale University.

Ottoman materials. Presentations have been lightly edited for clarity. An update from early 2023 rounds out this article.

Truly a collaborative effort, the project has benefited tremendously from the insights and guidance of our colleagues near and far. We wish to extend our very grateful thanks to Robin Dougherty, numerous colleagues at Beinecke, Evyn Kropf, and Yasemin Sönmez for their wisdom and support.

Özgen Felek

Launched by Edward A. Salisbury's 1870 donation, Yale University's collection of Islamic manuscripts is now the third-largest collection of Islamic manuscripts in the United States.¹²⁵ Beinecke's Islamic manuscripts are preserved in ten collections with varying degrees of access (before the start of our project in September).¹²⁶

1. Turkish MSS (188), cataloged on cards only.
2. Turkish MSS suppl. (276), described on worksheets, with only no. 276 in the online catalog.
3. Persian MSS (234), call numbers in Orbis and cards stop at 234.

¹²⁵ Regarding Edward Elbridge Salisbury's biography and academic work, see Benjamin R. Foster, "Edward E. Salisbury America's First Arabist," *Al-Usur Al-Wusta* 9, no. 1 (April 1997): 15–17; Benjamin R. Foster and Karen Polinger Foster, "Edward Salisbury and A. I. Silvestre de Sacy," in *Ex Oriente Lux et Veritas: Yale, Salisbury, and Early Orientalism*. Karen Polinger Foster, Yale Babylonian Collection Occasional Papers 1 (New Haven: Yale Babylonian Collection, 2017), 25–41; Foster Benjamin R "Light and Truth from the Orient: Yale and the Middle East, 1715–2015" (in preparation); and Roberta Dougherty, "Collecting Ottoman Turkish Manuscripts at Yale," Off-the-Shelf: Re-discovering Yale's Uncatalogued Ottoman Manuscripts Symposium, 11 December 2019. The collection's history was briefly described by Roberta L. Dougherty at MELA 2020 in her presentation "A Brief History of Yale's Hidden Collection of Turkish Manuscripts." See also Özgen Felek, "Thoughts and Observations on the Turkish Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library" *MELA Notes* 94 (2021): 1–32.

¹²⁶ I would like to thank Ellen Doon, former head of Beinecke's manuscript unit, for her help in compiling this list.

4. Persian MSS suppl. (106), queued for cataloging; only nos. 105 and 106 are currently cataloged.
5. Arabic MSS (576)
6. Arabic MSS suppl. (760)
7. Hartford Seminary Arabic MSS (1253)
8. Salisbury MSS (103)
9. Landberg MSS (774)
10. Hartford Seminary Miscellaneous MSS (327 unsorted manuscripts, of which 103 items in Turkish)¹²⁷

As can be seen, two large collections include Turkish manuscripts: Turkish MSS and Turkish MSS suppl. In summer and fall 2019, I worked closely on these collections and created a full list of all the Turkish items they contain. In addition to the 464 pieces in these two groups, I located a further 103 Turkish items among the Hartford Seminary Miscellaneous MSS. Additional Turkish manuscripts and texts are found among the Arabic materials in Arabic MSS, Arabic MSS suppl., Hartford Seminary Arabic MSS, Landberg MSS, and Salisbury MSS.¹²⁸ Given the number of manuscripts involved, there were days when I inspected more than twenty manuscripts.

Together these collections hold 567 Turkish items, including not only manuscripts, but also a scroll calendar (Turkish MSS suppl. 252), the passport of an Ottoman pasha (Salisbury MSS 103), and imperial orders (Turkish MSS 27, dated H. 1273/M. 1857; Turkish MSS 114, dated H. 1322/M. 1904; and Turkish MSS suppl. 254, dated H. 1314/M. 1896).

Beinecke's Turkish manuscripts vary in date from the mid-fifteenth (eight manuscripts) to the beginning of the twentieth century (nine manuscripts). The majority of the manuscripts were copied in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹²⁹ Yet, of those nearly six

¹²⁷ Items in this series are renumbered as they are cataloged. Completed Ottoman Turkish records may be found under Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS.

¹²⁸ Manuscripts can be found in the catalog (<http://library.yale.edu>) by doing a genre/form search for "Turkish manuscripts."

¹²⁹ I have discussed the details of my research elsewhere: Ozgen Felek, "Beinecke Nadir Kitaplar ve Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi'nde Yer Alan Türkçe Yazma Eserlere Dair Müşâhede ve Mülâhazalar "Thoughts and Observations on the Turkish

hundred manuscripts, only one—Turkish MSS suppl. 276, a copy of Kātib Çelebi's *Tuhfetü'l-kibār fī esfārü'l-bihār*—had been cataloged before the start of our project.

Stunned by the richness of these three collections, I decided to incorporate Ottoman manuscripts into the materials of my fall 2019 course “Reading and Research in Ottoman History and Literature.” In Ottoman classes, I always use excerpts from Ottoman manuscripts ranging from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. I gather these excerpts from files I collected during my visits to manuscript libraries in Istanbul or manuscripts available online, such as Ottoman manuscripts at Harvard or Hathi Trust Digital Library. There is no doubt that, as physical objects of the past, manuscripts are visually stimulating. Having seen the rich collection in the Beinecke, it was my hope that their visual presentation, their artwork, their smell experienced through direct interaction with the manuscripts would help my students engage, interact with, and connect to the early modern Ottoman world more effectively than xeroxes. Yet, I should state that teaching Ottoman Turkish (at least in the US) has its own challenges. Students come to class with different language levels, and we have to create effective ways so that each student in class can benefit, whether beginner, intermediate, or advanced. While going through Beinecke's Turkish manuscripts, I categorized them with these concerns in mind and also considering genres.¹³⁰

My ten students—seven graduate and three undergraduate—each chose a manuscript to examine throughout the semester as they worked towards their final projects. The final assignment required students to work on a text and present it at a symposium so that they could introduce their manuscripts and Beinecke's hidden Turkish

Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,” in *Halk ve Bilim Arasında Bir Ömür Prof. Dr. İsmail Görkem Armağanı*, ed. Erhan Çapraz (Konya: Kömen Yayınları, 2020), 455–478. For a slightly revised version and translation of the article, see Felek, “Thoughts and Observations on the Turkish Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.”

¹³⁰ I shared my experience of teaching with manuscripts in a language class in detail at the MELE conference in 2020: “Deciphering Yale's Turkish Manuscripts and Utilizing Them in a Language Class,” (presentation, Middle East Librarians Association Conference, online, 19 October 2020).

collections to a wider audience. Based on their language skills and their academic interests, I proposed a set of five manuscripts for each student to choose from. After visiting and discussing these manuscripts with me, students chose the following manuscripts as their final projects:

- *Muḳaddime-i ibn Ḥaldūn* (*Ibn Khaldun's Prolegomena*), Turkish MSS 53, Marshall Watson, PhD student, History
- Merchant's memorandum book, Turkish MSS 25, Matthew Dudley, PhD student, History
- *Risāle fī'l-baḥs ve'l-münāzarā* (Treatise on Dialectical Disputation), Turkish MSS 151, Hatice Sak, MA student, Civilization Studies, Ibn Haldun University
- *Mesā'il-i şer'īye* (Issues in Islamic Law), Turkish MSS 179, ff. 1–35, Edmund (Ned) Levin, JD/MBA student, Yale Law and Business Schools
- *Şu'ar-i mekātib* (Epistolary Formulas), Turkish MSS 22, Selin Ünlüöner, PhD student, Art History
- *Kitāb-ı Şāhidī* (The Book of *Şāhidī*), Turkish MSS suppl. 257, Sharon Mizbani, PhD student, Art History
- *Kitāb-ı 'ilm-i ḥāl* (Manual on Living a Spiritual (Muslim) Life), Turkish MSS 29, Bayan Abubakr, PhD student, History
- *Terceme-i cedīde fī'l-ḥavāṣṣi'l-müfrefde* (New Translation for Special Terminologies), Turkish MSS suppl. 6, Fatoş Derin Karadeniz, senior, Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology
- *Kelimāt-ı Türkīye* (Turkish vocabulary), Turkish MSS 12, Kumsal Özgür, senior, Economy and Psychology¹³¹
- Pocket-sized booklet on magic and prayers, Turkish MSS suppl. 250, Eda Uzunlar, sophomore, Political Science

We visited Beinecke throughout the semester. In addition to scheduled visits, students were required to visit Beinecke on their own and to

¹³¹ For a thorough analysis of the *Kelimāt-ı Türkīye* (Turkish vocabulary), Turkish MSS 12, see Ozgen Felek, "Thomas H. Dowson'ın Türkçe Kelimeler Defteri" [The Turkish Wordlist Notebook of Thomas H. Dowson], in *Prof. Dr. Pervin Çapan Armağanı*. Nagehan Uçan Eke and Nilüfer Tanç (Muğla: Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2021), 550–563.

spend at least one hour with their manuscripts over the semester. I provided the students a rubric to help them better engage with their manuscripts during our Beinecke visits. Questions asked students to identify the binding and cover of their manuscripts; patterns embroidered on the cover; labels indicating when, how, and by whom a manuscript came to Yale; the name of the author/copyist/translator, or date on the inner cover page; table of contents, if any; foliation marked on the manuscript; page size and number of lines; color of inks used; watermarks, decoration, maps, diagrams, miniatures, illuminations, if any; details of the colophon—i.e., date, author/scribe/translator name, city name; seal(s), if any; and the subject of the manuscript in general.

Using this rubric, students filled out a handout to understand the different parts of their manuscripts. As stated in the course syllabus, students were expected to use their findings in their final paper that they wrote to be presented not only to me, but also a scholarly audience at a symposium scheduled for December 2019. That same rubric later became our primary rubric when we started cataloging these hidden Turkish manuscripts in fall 2022.

On December 11, 2019, Roberta Dougherty and I organized a symposium titled, “Off the Shelf: A Symposium to Re-Discover Yale’s Uncatalogued Ottoman Manuscripts.” The day opened with welcoming remarks by Raymond Clemens, Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts at Beinecke, and the story of the Turkish manuscripts’ journey to Yale starting from 1870 by Roberta Dougherty. My students and I then shared our findings with scholars and curious readers. That was the first time Beinecke’s hidden Turkish manuscripts were introduced to the academic world as a whole. The symposium received great attention from students, faculty members, and librarians of Yale, Brown, Columbia, and New York Universities.

Following the symposium, I reached out to Edwin Schroeder, then director of the Beinecke, and later Michelle Light, Beinecke director since October 2021, with a project and plan to start cataloging the Turkish manuscripts and in September 2022, we started this collaborative cataloging project. A new question emerged: Where to start?



Figure 2 Four copies of Four copies of *Menāsiku'l-ḥacc*

As a starting point, we chose twenty-five manuscripts from among the Ottoman Turkish collections to be cataloged in the first semester. When selecting manuscripts, we initially focused on prominent works of Ottoman literature and culture—texts that were widely read during the Ottoman Empire and which still receive great attention from scholars. In particular, we wanted to catalog texts with multiple copies located across all three collections. To catalog these manuscripts, I work in collaboration with Ayşe Çiçek Ünal, Agnieszka Rec, and Yasemin Sönmez. We hold meetings to discuss material aspects, calligraphical styles, and the notes on the front and back covers and in the margins.

Manuscripts with multiple copies present particular opportunities. For example, Beinecke holds eight copies of Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed's Muḥammediye: Turkish MSS 164, Turkish MSS suppl. 31, Turkish MSS suppl. 124, Turkish MSS suppl. 169, Turkish MSS suppl. 171, Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 8, Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 9, Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 12.¹³² When cataloging texts in multiple copies, Ayşe and I open all the copies of a text next to one another, and one of us reads out loud while the other follows along in order to locate missing folios, phrases, or words from one copy to the next and identify their differences from one another.

Working with multiple copies of the same text also eases the cataloger's task and speeds the cataloging process. While manuscripts cannot be copy cataloged, information can nonetheless be repeated from one manuscript record to another.

We also prioritized those manuscripts needing special care so that they can be cataloged and quickly sent to conservation. For example, two copies of Yahyā Bey's *Şāh u Gedā*—Turkish MSS 107 (date unknown) and Turkish MSS Suppl. 109 (A. H. 811/A. D. 1407?)—need special care due to damage from bookworms. Now, they are available for researchers to find on Orbis and have been sent to our colleagues in conservation for stabilizing treatment.

Agnieszka Rec

Following on from Özgen's comments, I would like to continue the story of our project's beginnings. I will then discuss preparing for the project from a cataloger's angle, especially as a cataloger whose expertise lies in other geographies and other languages.

As an early materials cataloger at Beinecke, I am responsible for describing our European print books and manuscripts to 1500. It has been my pleasure to expand outside this geography in our current project. My role in our Ottoman work is to supervise and train Ayşe in Beinecke cataloging practices, set cataloging policy, and handle

¹³² Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 12 was formerly Hartford Seminary Misc. MSS 244.

general project management tasks like coordinating spaces, job posting, and other organizational elements.

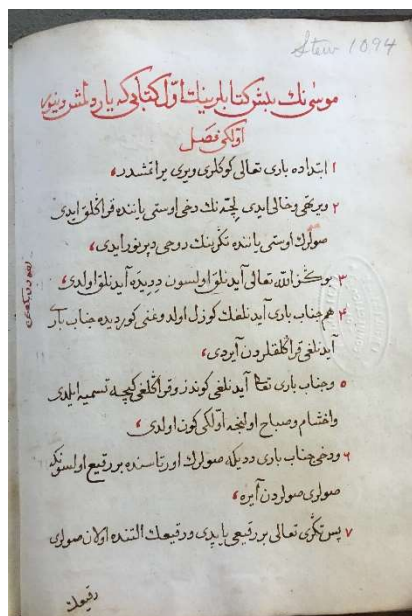


Figure 3 Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 1, Ottoman Turkish translation of the Pentateuch and major prophets, 17th century. Accompanying bookseller descriptions identify this manuscript as the holograph copy of the translator, Ali Ufkî (Wojciech Bobowski).

Recall that Turkish manuscripts at Beinecke are found primarily in three series: Turkish MSS 1–188; Turkish MSS supplement 1–276; Hartford Seminary Miscellaneous MSS, which contains 103 manuscripts. These last are renumbered into the Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS series as they are cataloged.

Prior to this September, only 1 of those 567 Turkish manuscripts was discoverable in our online catalog: Turkish MSS suppl. 276, a nineteenth-century copy of Kâtib Çelebi's naval history *Tuhfetü'l-kibâr fî esfârü'l-bihâr*. Access to other manuscripts was scattered and less readily available to interested researchers and readers. Manuscripts in the Turkish MSS series had cards with basic bibliographical information.

Turkish MSS supplement manuscripts had worksheets from a previous cataloging project started in the 1990s, though never completed. These have proven quite useful for cataloging training. Rather than starting from scratch in identifying a manuscript's contents while at the same time learning MARC, Ayşe can use the worksheets as a jumping off point. To aid this process, I created documentation detailing how the fields in those worksheets mapped to MARC fields. There are some issues though: the Library of Congress's Ottoman Turkish romanization table had not yet been released when these worksheets were created. Examining the worksheets, Ayşe explained to me some of the confusion caused by

using Arabic transliteration for Ottoman manuscript. In one case, the worksheet for a manuscript of medical recipes yielded a “recipe for pain in honey (*bal*)” rather than for pain at the “waist” (*bel*) as intended.

All of which leads us to the current project, in which our list of cataloged manuscripts has grown considerably. We now have a total of ten manuscripts accessible in the online catalog—nearly a ten-fold increase!

The driving force behind this project, as you have heard, is Dr. Özgen Felek. She has been advocating for these materials for years, and her work as researcher and teacher has brought public interest to them, motivating the current cataloging efforts.

From the Beinecke side, as the story has been told to me, an important catalyzing moment was the Ottoman Turkish course she taught with these manuscripts. It received attention both in the Beinecke annual report for 2019–2020 and in the Yale News at the same time.¹³³ Her work and the reports about it highlighted both the wonders of these collections, but also called attention to the fact that they were under- and undescribed.

Our new director, Michelle Light, saw an opportunity when she arrived and green lit the program following a model she was familiar with from other institutions. The idea was to involve a graduate student in cataloging so that the library would get catalog records and discoverable manuscripts, while providing the student a chance to see and use materials otherwise unavailable, as well as gain experience working in a library as they plan their academic future.

By the time I joined Beinecke just over a year ago, the larger architecture of the project had been sorted out in discussions among Özgen, Robin, and colleagues in various units at Beinecke. That is,

¹³³ *Beinecke Illuminated*, no. 6, 2019–20 Annual Report, pp. 12–13; Mike Cummings, “In Ottoman Turkish manuscripts, Yale students find delicious mysteries,” *Yale News*, 18 December 2019, <https://news.yale.edu/2019/12/18/ottoman-turkish-manuscripts-yale-students-find-delicious-mysteries>.

that a cataloger would supervise a grad student in this work with faculty and librarian advice and mentorship. My job was then to work out the details: decide cataloging policy, set up templates, etc.

As a historian of the European Middle Ages, my expertise is in another geography, so I asked a lot of questions at the start. I asked about the manuscripts, their production, what elements were called; about what researchers expected; about cataloging needs and priorities.

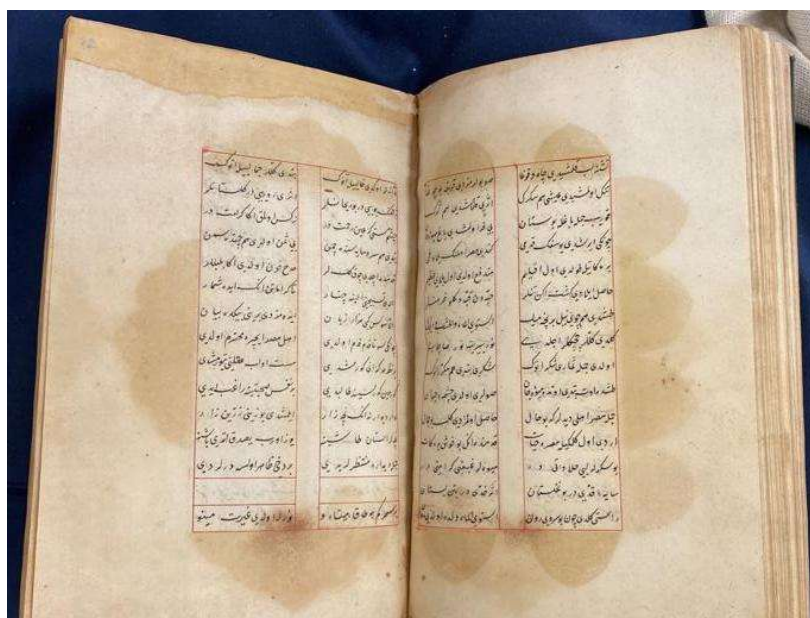


Figure 4 Silhouette paper, Turkish MSS suppl. 37, *Hamdullāh Ḥamdī*, *Yūsuf u Zelīhā*, H. 967/M. 1560.

The initial template mirrored the one being used for our Arabic collections, which are currently being cataloged and recataloged by our colleague Abdelahad Hannawi. If you look up one of the manuscripts in the Hartford Seminary Arabic MSS collection, for instance, you will see wonderfully thorough records that involve lots of transcription, especially of incipits and colophons. Robin and Özgen wisely suggested a more concise template for this project. Our goal is to provide description sufficient for researchers and students to find a given manuscript, but not so exhaustive as the Arabic records

since there are so many uncataloged manuscripts waiting in the wings. We would like to get as many of these described as possible, but only have so much of Ayşe's time.

As an aside, to respond to the question asked earlier about what our review workflow looks like: Ayşe and Özgen discuss each manuscript together, take their notes, and consult with Yasemin Sönmez as needed. Ayşe then drafts her records in Google Docs, where I review them. We then copy the information into OCLC and import it to Voyager.

Another discussion bound by similar practical constraints was the question of cataloging standard. Our Turkish manuscripts run from mid-fifteenth- to early twentieth-century, so we would ordinarily switch between AMREMM and DCRM(MSS) as dictated by chronology. However, for this project we decided to use AMREMM across the board. That way Ayşe only needs to learn one standard, and I only need to set up one template. The efficiency of simplicity.

Beyond convenience, though, is also the recognition that the AMREMM/DCRM(MSS) distinction is based, as the catalogers in the room know, on a European book historical division that simply does not apply to Islamic or Ottoman Turkish manuscripts. After print arrived in Europe in the fifteenth century, the possibilities for manuscripts changed fundamentally and we now catalog European manuscripts differently on either side of that divide. Islamic manuscripts, by contrast, have a much more stable tradition that is well served by the many notes suggested by AMREMM.

As I conclude, I hope it is clear by now that this has been an iterative process. To the degree that it has been successful—which I believe it has!—that is due to the wonderful team we have and in particular to space we have created for asking lots of questions. There is lots of room to ask: What is this called? How do you record that? What are the benefits of doing things this way rather than that way? I often see this in Western manuscripts, is that also true of Turkish materials? (And vice versa.)

So, I want to end by thanking my collaborators in this project for their wisdom and collegiality. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to work with this team.

And with that I will turn it over to Ayşe to talk about her experience of the work.

Ayşe Çiçek Ünal

I would like to start with an overview of my background, research interests, and library work experience, as well as how I came to be involved in this amazing project. I am a PhD student in the history department at Yale, and my research investigates Ottoman rule in North Africa in the early modern period. Titled “An Empire on the Edge: Law, Autonomy, and Authority in Ottoman North Africa, 1650–1700,” my dissertation studies the construction, projection, and contestation of the Ottoman Empire in its far-flung provinces in North Africa. It demonstrates that notwithstanding their relative distance from the Ottoman capital of Constantinople, the regencies played central roles in establishing and maintaining Ottoman naval power in the Mediterranean Sea and containing and confronting European encroachment in the basin. Moreover, these regencies proved instrumental in facilitating an autonomous legal space in which Ottomans negotiated with their European rivals with enhanced leverage but reduced commitment. The regencies furnished the empire not only with seasoned admirals and seafarers for the royal navy but also protected the Ottomans from European encroachments. In my research, I rely on Ottoman Turkish source materials.

I am thrilled to collaborate as a student cataloging assistant, with my cataloging adviser, Agnieszka, faculty adviser, Prof. Özgen, and also dear Robin, our Librarian for Middle East Studies and the Near East Collection, in this Turkish manuscript cataloging project at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. I am very grateful for their unwavering support and guidance.

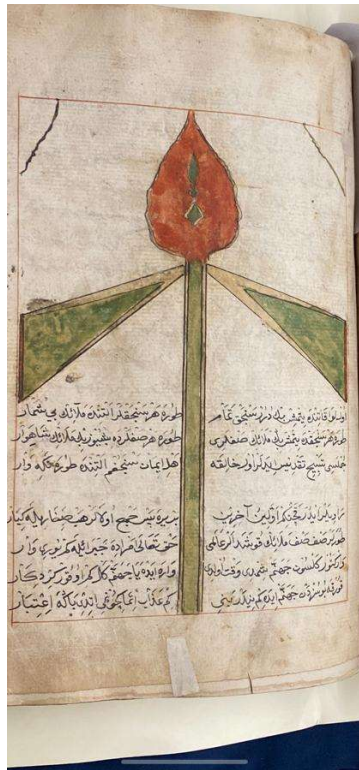


Figure 5 Representation of the Banner of Praise, Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 8, Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed Efendi, Muḥammediye, H. 1158/M. 1745.

I was trained as a historian and studied Ottoman Turkish and Ottoman paleography in my undergraduate and graduate degrees in TOBB University in Ankara and Istanbul Şehir University in Istanbul. In addition, I took Arabic and Persian language classes to enhance my comprehension skills, as Ottoman Turkish consists of numerous Arabic and Persian phrases. Both my senior thesis and master's thesis rely on primary sources, specifically Ottoman archival documents. After graduation, I worked as a manuscript librarian and curator at Süleymaniye Library, where I had significant experience with manuscripts. When I started the graduate program at Yale, I learned about the Ottoman collections at Beinecke from Prof. Özgen. I was tremendously excited to explore them; however, the library was closed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Robin put it aptly in suggesting our panel title—Light Shone on the

Hidden Collection. This collection is now available to us and you all who are interested in discovering Ottoman manuscripts covering mathematics, astrology, history, law, literature, as well as the Qur'an and Hadith. Since this project is embryonic, it would be too early to

give a more thorough overview, but I would like to share my experiences so far.

As mentioned earlier, we are working primarily on three collections: Turkish MSS suppl., Turkish MSS, and Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS. Before starting this project, I got training on MARC, OCLC, and Voyager. Gaining both technical and practical training in these widely used cataloging tools is an invaluable experience for me. I have an enormous debt of gratitude to Agnieszka for her bearing with me. At the end of this project, I hope that I will have accumulated experience and skills in cataloging.

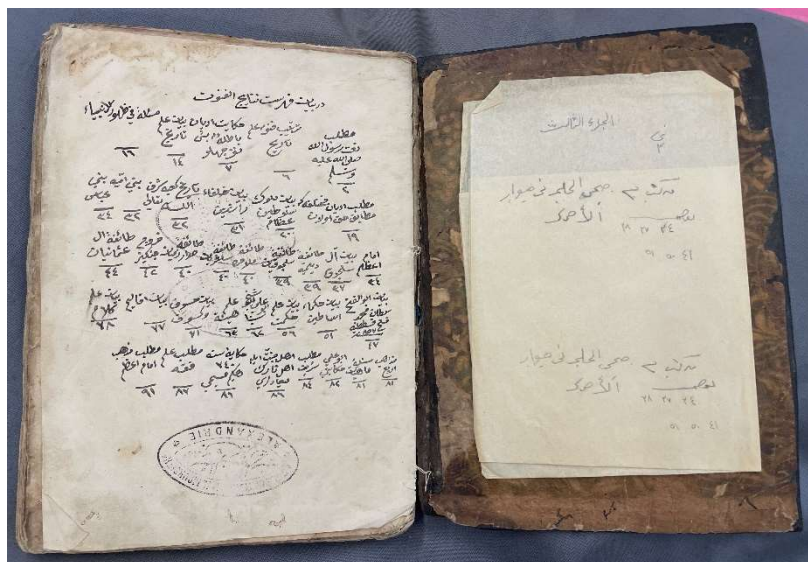


Figure 6 Text with book stamp and accompanying notes. Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 3, Nevî, *Netâ'iyicü'l-fünûn ve meḥâsinü'l-mütûn*, 17th century.

I want to mention some of the hardships familiar to all of us. The cataloging project prioritizes Turkish MSS suppl. items as there are handwritten cataloging notes of a library cataloger from the 1990s. These were written based on Arabic romanization, and it was challenging for us to use these descriptions as we must adopt the standard romanization of Ottoman Turkish. Also, there are some Ottoman Turkish manuscripts and texts among the Arabic collections which have been transliterated mistakenly according to Arabic rules.

We hope to update Turkish records in the Arabic collections as part of the project. Other problems are physical ones: some manuscripts are affected by worming, some are missing pages, titles, dates, authors, etc. These issues might be unsurprising to many of you, right?

We decided on a list of multiple manuscripts written by prominent scholars and started cataloging texts with multiple copies. This enables us to look at different copies comparatively and determine missing pages or added notes.

Also, I would like to state that my research on Ottoman Turkish archival documents and chronicles and my work experience both inform my approach to this project. Before starting this cataloging, I already had some exposure to examining manuscripts for physical description. I include relevant information, such as physical descriptions, marginal annotations, illuminations, stamps, and text content. This project also contributes immensely to my bibliographic knowledge, enriches my understanding of the manuscript, and broadens my perspective. It motivates me to imagine potential research questions in every single manuscript. At Beinecke, we work with the manuscripts in hand, which allows me to explore material aspects, such as glazed paper, leather, ink, binding, doublures, etc. At my previous job, we worked from digitized copies of almost all manuscripts. This was feasible since the library has more than two hundred thousand copies. Thus, having the privilege of working closely with precious sources in Beinecke is rewarding.

One of the most common problems I encounter is the need for more standardization in cataloging Ottoman Turkish sources. It is a significant problem to see that Arabic- or Persian-speaking librarians often catalog Ottoman Turkish sources with Persian or Arabic transliterations and diacritics. Also, Turkish manuscript libraries (Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu) or university manuscript libraries have been using more local cataloging systems, which differ from MARC. Recently, Yazma Eserler Uygulama

ve Araştırma Merkezi (Manuscripts Application and Research Center), a department supported by a waqf dating back to 1471 and directed by Dr. Sami Arslan, was founded by the Turkish General

Directorate of Foundations within the FSMVÜ. This institution aims to enrich our understanding of manuscript culture and formalize a set of cataloging guidance. It is great to see these initiatives in Turkey.

I should also mention that we have an excellent working environment at Beinecke. The project team is always available to me. Outside of our team, there are other contributors from different fields. I want to express my gratitude to Abdelahad Hannawi, Near East Catalog Librarian, who has profound experience in Arabic manuscript cataloging. In addition, Turkish calligrapher, manuscript expert, and independent scholar Yasemin Sönmez supports our project by providing us with detailed explanations of material aspects and calligraphical styles of the manuscripts. There are also Yale graduate students contributing to the projects. Ahmet Tahir Nur, Beinecke research fellow, and Yusuf Ünal, a research associate at Yale Law School are always supportive of the project and bring some significant materials to our attention. This remarkable collaboration and increasing interest in the Ottoman manuscript collections here accelerates the cataloging project and contributes to the awareness of scholars and researchers both in Turkey and the USA.

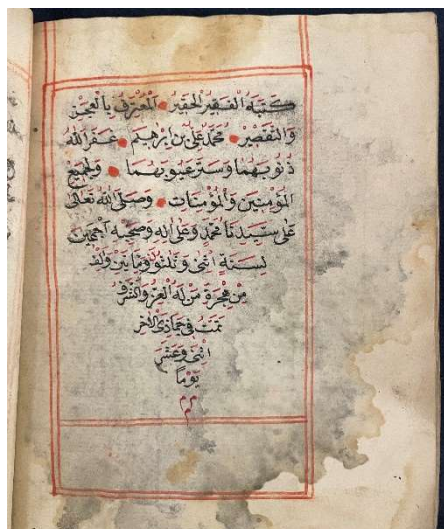


Figure 7 Colophon, Turkish MSS 100, Sinān Efendi, *Menāsiku'l-ḥacc*, H. 1232/M. 1817.

I am also organizing introductory sessions for Yale College students, student associations, and workshop groups on Islamic manuscripts at Beinecke in fall and spring semesters in 2023 in order to give them an overview of Ottoman manuscript collections. It is exciting to see growing interest in these manuscripts.

I want to once again thank Robin for bringing the cataloging project to your attention. Also, many thanks

to you all for listening. It was great to meet you even though virtually.

Update from March 2023

We have continued to make quick progress in the three months since our MELA presentation. As of mid-March, you can find 39 Turkish manuscripts in our online catalog. Back in January, Özgen prepared a



Figure 8 Doublure and portrait miniature, Turkish MSS suppl. 257, Şahidî İbrâhîm Dede, *Kitâb-ı Şâhidî*.

new set of twenty-five manuscripts for this semester's cataloging queue, including five copies each of Süleymân Çelebi's *Mevlid-i şerîf / Vesiletü'n-necât*¹³⁴ and Hamdu'llâh Hamdî's *Yūsuf u Zelîhâ*¹³⁵; four copies each of

Yazıcıoğlu/Yazıcı-zâde Aḥmed Bîcân's *Dürr-i meknûn*¹³⁶ and Üveys ibn Muḥammed Veysî's *Siyer-i Veysî*¹³⁷; and three copies of

Vā'iz Sinân Efendi el-Mekkî's *Menāsiku'l-ḥacc*,¹³⁸ as well as one of

¹³⁴ Turkish MSS suppl. 112, copied in H. 1110/M. 1698; Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 14 (formerly Hartford Seminary Misc. MSS 99); Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 11 (formerly Hartford Seminary Misc. MSS 138); Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 10 (formerly Hartford Seminary Misc. MSS 145); Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 13 (formerly Hartford Seminary Misc. MSS 172).

¹³⁵ Turkish MSS 101, copied in H. 969/M. 1562; Turkish MSS 169, copied in 16th or 17th century; Turkish MSS suppl. 21, copied in H. 1017/M. 1608; Turkish MSS suppl. 37, copied in H. 969/M. 1561; Turkish MSS suppl. 49, copied in 16th or 17th century.

¹³⁶ Turkish MSS 86, copied in H. 1251/M. 1835; Turkish MSS 102, copied in H. 1110/M. 1698/1699; Turkish MSS suppl. 34, copied in H. 991/M. 1583; Turkish MSS suppl. 128, copied in H. 1026/M. 1617.

¹³⁷ Turkish MSS 123, ff. 1–97, copied in H. 1036/M. 1626; Turkish MSS 124, copied in 16th or 17th century; Turkish MSS suppl. 36, copied in H. 1083/M. 1672; Turkish MSS suppl. 64.

¹³⁸ Turkish MSS 100, copied in H. 1232/M. 1817; Turkish MSS suppl. 147, copied in H. 1189/M. 1775; Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 16, copied in 17th or 18th century (formerly Hartford Seminary Misc. MSS 135).

Muṣṭafā Efendi el-Diyār-ı Bekrî's *Kitāb-ı menāsik*.¹³⁹ We are making such quick progress that Özgen has drawn up a second list for this semester and we plan to start on it in late March. The new queue includes manuscripts already fully and partially digitized through the Yale University Library Digital Collections.

Conversations about best practices continue. We have settled on a more robust template for binding descriptions and are working out how best to describe *mecmū'a*, balancing discoverability and access to contents with a recognition that some compilations are so complex that their details are best explored in scholarly articles rather than catalog records.

Beinecke is committed to seeing the project through and cataloging all of the Ottoman Turkish manuscripts. We are exploring various possibilities to continue and to speed along the work, including bringing another student onto the project in the fall or inviting outside collaborators to support our work. Encouragingly, our project is being used as a model at Beinecke as the library seeks to address other un- or underdescribed manuscript collections, particularly of non-Western materials.

¹³⁹ Hartford Seminary Turkish MSS 15, copied in 17th or 18th century (formerly Hartford Seminary Misc. MSS 33).

The Digital Experience in the Division of Special Collections at the Qatar National Library

MARYAM A. AL-MUTAWA
QATAR NATIONAL LIBRARY

Representation is very simple; if you don't see something, you don't know it exists. Making our heritage accessible to a global audience is fundamental to creating such an audience.

Qatar National Library (QNL) was established in 2017 with the vision of being one of the world's preeminent centers of learning, research, and culture. QNL is a guardian of the region's heritage, an institution that promotes imagination, discovery, and nourishment of the human spirit. With a mission to preserve national and regional heritage, it strives to enable the people of Qatar to positively influence society by providing an exceptionally innovative learning environment. QNL achieves its mission by creating a sustainable, intuitive, and reliable information environment through cutting-edge programs and services that reflect cultural and technological excellence.

The Heritage Library is at the heart of the Library and one of QNL's most important departments. A significant part of its collection is rare books, maps, and manuscripts that reflect our national and regional heritage. We have 174,866 rare items, including more than 90,000 printed books, mainly in Arabic and English, but in some European languages as well, such as German, Spanish, and French. The library

also boasts more than 1,500 maps and over 4,000 manuscripts which make up our one-of-a-kind Qur'anic manuscript collection. These 4,000 manuscript pages come from all over the Islamic world, ranging from China to Andalusia in Spain. They show the development of Arabic script and how each geographical area had its own unique style and development of Arabic calligraphy.

Moreover, there are models of the planet Earth, writings from travelers and explorers, and thousands of archival materials from Arab and Islamic manuscripts, correspondence, historical documents, audio recordings, old publications in Arabic, Latin, English, and other languages, and approximately 87,000 photographs. Some of the Heritage Library's many rare objects are on display in the exhibition area at the center of the library. Evoking an archaeological site, the maze at the heart of our Library offers an opportunity for visitors to get close to 350 of our most valuable items.

One of the MELA Conference topics this year is "The Digital Transformation in the Middle East and National and International Collaboration for Middle Eastern Collections and Services." This aligns well with the Heritage Library's current strategic priority, which is the digital transformation of its collection. As the Head of Special Collection Access, I will present the digital experience of the Heritage Library's collection at QNL.

Item digitization

The National Digitization Center is a state-of-the-art facility equipped with a Digitization Laboratory working to accomplish the goal of digitizing Arab and Islamic heritage items and materials to enhance the visibility, accessibility, and usability of our local and regional heritage. The Center follows Qatar's Media, Culture, and Heritage National Digitization Plan developed by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology. (Digitization Services | Qatar National Library, n.d.) The Center's highly qualified team continually improves our methodologies to ensure maximum value for digital

audiences. Its Digitization Laboratory is sub-divided into five sections:

- Image Capturing
- Image Enhancement
- Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
- Quality Control
- Audiovisual Digitization

Our scanners scan up to 600dpi optical resolution and accommodate material sizes up to A0. Our cutting-edge technology includes ICC color-managed workflow, advanced image enhancement software tools, and text recognition for Arabic and Latin text using OCR technologies. Image on text techniques allow users to access and search text within an image in Arabic and Latin-based languages. We also have high-tech imaging and lighting equipment for 3D imaging. Our highly capable digitization specialists use this technology to digitize 2,000 to 2,500 pages per day (QNL Digitization Services, n.d.).

The Digitization Services division of the Digitization Center formulated a strategy in 2017 to digitize the Heritage Library's collection, along with some partners' collections. Its strategic efforts have been a great success: since 2015, QNL has digitized more than 14 million pages of Arabic and non-Arabic items in total, nearly 2 million of which are from the Heritage Library itself (Internal source, Qatar Digital Library). QNL's goal of preserving local and regional culture is achieved thanks to the Digitization Center, which brings thousands of never-before-seen items to the web for digital access, study, and archiving. This technology-friendly form of cultural preservation additionally allows this history to be accessed for short- and long-term projects, exhibitions, and events. Digitization furthermore provides scholars around the world access to previously inaccessible documents, bringing our region's history to the global academic realm. This is in line with our vision of being a center for learning, research and culture. Most of the region's history is notably oral, and the digitization of its text-based history (and audiovisual

accounts) is an important step for the cultural preservation and digitization of Middle Eastern and Islamic history.

At the Library, our Digitization Laboratory fulfills digitization projects and requests from QNL and other external collections, making it a unique and invaluable resource of digitization services in the Middle East. Custom digitization projects are provided for governmental and private institutions, as well as the local community. Saleem (2022) notes that the QNL has recorded more than 64 million interactions via digital platforms since its opening in 2017. In 2021 alone, more than 2.5 million users accessed our heritage works online and these numbers are growing according to Atty & Haleem (2023), proving that the services we provide are in demand and accomplishing the QNL's mission of positively influencing society as a learning environment.

Due to physical restrictions imposed to minimize contagion during the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked from home, so this work naturally slowed. Departmental tasks and procedures did not stop, but there was a growing concern: how could we, as a national library, keep providing our services to the public? What is our role in the community, and how do we best meet the needs of the public despite any obstacles? With these questions in mind, our teams continued to work toward the Library's vision of being a center for learning, research, and culture. We accomplished this vision through pursuing one of the Library's first goals, which suddenly became a pressing need in the face of COVID-19: digitization.

Life outside slowed down, but life on the internet sped up exponentially. The Library continued to receive digitization requests, and our teams met incoming requests to the best of their ability, bearing in mind copyright restrictions and the capacity of our Digitization Laboratory team. If an item or material was out of copyright, it was sent to the Digitization Lab and a PDF copy was sent to the user within two working days. In this manner, the cloud of COVID-19 had a silver lining: we fast-tracked the collection's digitization plan for conservation purposes.

With all the difficulties that COVID-19 brought to daily life, one advantage was that it helped set our digital transformation plan in motion for the Special Collections & Archives division. We developed digital solutions that will ultimately have a profound effect on the quality of our services. Work began on a digital transformation report, which has now been finalized and is ready for roll-out. This will serve as a foundation for the Heritage Library's digital development plan, including different digital platforms that promote our collections to the public and enhance our interactions with online audiences.

Digital Platforms

In terms of access to digitized items, we have two main digital platforms: Qatar Digital Library (QDL) and the Library's Digital Repository.

The QDL was launched in October 2014, born from a partnership known as the 10-year Memorandum of Understanding between Qatar Foundation (QF), the QNL, and the British Library (BL) (Mutawa, 2019). QDL is a bilingual Arabic-English online library and one of the world's largest online collections of the Gulf's history and culture. The purpose of QDL is to digitize the trove of recorded Arab and Islamic history and make it freely accessible to the public.

The expansive digital library includes archives, maps, manuscripts, sound recordings, photographs, drawings, and much more, complete with contextualized explanatory notes and links available in both Arabic and English. The aim of QDL is to share this digitized treasure trove of the Arabian Gulf's modern history with academics, researchers, and those with a general interest.

There are four phases that mark the development of the QDL project-partnership between QNL and BL. The first three phases have been completed, and we are now undergoing the fourth phase of the project (Internal source, QDL).

In its first phase, the QDL made available about 500,000 digital pages relating to the history of the Gulf. Approximately 475,000 pages dating from the mid-1700s until 1951 came from the BL's archives, such as the India Office Records and Private Papers and the archives of the East India Company. Around 25,000 pages were medieval and modern Arabic and English manuscripts. The contract for this first phase was signed in June 2012 for a 10-year collaborative program, and it officially began in July 2012 and lasted through December 2014, for a duration of 30 months.

On 22 October 2014, the QDL portal was launched in two locations: at the QNL in Education City in Doha, Qatar, and at the BL in London, UK. While many items come from BL, QDL has been in a state of expansion following the signing of agreements with different archives that have collections related to the Gulf.

The second and third phases lasted from 2015 to 2021 and included augmenting the digitization process through implementing wider scales and the allocating an entire section dedicated to the QDL project in the BL's main building.

Over the span of these phases, the QDL built the Digitization Center and supplied technology such as digitizing machines, high-tech imaging equipment and a preservation laboratory to support the workflow. Staff were assigned to examine archival documents and check their suitability for the project before the preservation laboratory decided whether and in which way the digitization or photography should be done. Currently, QDL contains a little over 2.4 million items and 225 expert articles. In Phase 4, which commenced in July 2022 and is due for completion in December 2025, we will add an additional 675,000 digitized pages and 70 new expert articles (Internal source, QDL).

Our second platform is the Qatar National Library Digital Repository, a more specialized project that is also available for free online. The Digital Repository is part of QNL's Heritage Library Collection. This portal allows users to browse two collections, that of the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) in Doha and that of the Qatar National Library. It also allows users to browse by materials belonging to several

categories: 3-D, archival documents, books, cartographic material, manuscripts, newspapers, posters, and prints and photographs.

Everything that undergoes digitization is either selected through patron request or at the recommendation of our specialized librarians. The platform is currently exclusive to the Heritage Library and the MIA's collections and does not include other archives' collections, unlike QDL. There are some heritage items and materials found in the collection that may be restricted due to copyright laws. If they are still under copyright, they are only accessible inside the Library network; outside, an embargo is imposed.

The Digital Repository team is planning to develop a more interactive user interface to engage with the public using tools that allow users to comment and communicate with each other online, further developing the information environment that we aim to provide.

Digital Family Archive Project

One of the initiatives I would like to highlight is the Digital Family Archive Project. This idea blossomed after the success of a temporary exhibition I curated at the Library showcasing private collections from six different Qatari families, which ran from December 2018 to January 2019 and was called "Qatar Through Private Collections." The exhibition reflected the history of Qatar through family-owned photographs, artifacts, and documents that would otherwise be inaccessible to the greater public. The goal of this project was to represent Qatar's collective memory of its history, (QNL Exhibition to Explore Qatar's History Through Family Collections, 2018) and preserve said families' histories, which are an important cultural dimension reflecting Qatar's past.

From the success of the exhibition "Qatar Through Private Collections", the Digital Family Archive Project was born. Our first steps in this new project involved arranging meetings with various families and encouraging them to collaborate with us. It is important to note that Qatari society is generally quite private. To ask them to contribute their personal lives to this project, it was necessary to convince them of the importance of showcasing such private items and

their potential as visual markers of Qatari heritage and history. These meetings also explored the rights of objects; with time and in collaboration with the families, we are creating an agreement wherein original owners retain possession of their items, and the Library is allowed to digitize and preserve copies. Guarantees will ensure that no item is used or displayed against the families' will in the Digital Family Archive Project.

During the last five years, we have reached a consensus on the basic structure of the process, which is as follows: after we meet the family and agree on what we will include in the project, an agreement is reached between the family and the Library to guarantee all parties' rights are protected.

The work begins when we receive the collection. In this stage, we must check, classify, catalogue, digitize, and undertake minor conservation treatment, if needed. There is also the task of identifying and recording the metadata, which is conducted with the utmost attention to detail. The metadata is written in cooperation with a representative of the family, who is required to approve metadata for each item before it is uploaded to the Digital Repository under the family's name. This project is still a work in progress, but we hope that it will be launched by the end of this year. However, we have started on a small scale with three Qatari families, and we are working closely with them to analyze their family collections, some of which date back to the late 1700s.

Digital Tables

Another interactive tool we provide at the Library to browse the Special Collections are our digital tables. These tables have interactive screens that are used to view more of our collections. The user interface of these tables allows for the input of several different display designs, and we are working now on the first design, which is based on the travels of Ibn Battuta, one of the world's greatest explorers. The digital table interface uses Ibn Battuta's voyage route to guide the user through his travels around the world. Through Ibn Battuta, users will also explore items in our Heritage Collection that

relate to these cities. To cite an example, if the user clicked on Aleppo, the interactive map would pull up historical images from Aleppo, some important books related to the city, and include some information about what Ibn Battuta saw in Aleppo. This design is meant to provide an immersive experience that showcases both our Heritage Collection and the great Ibn Battuta's famed travels.

Exhibitions and Events

Online Events

In 2020, the Heritage Library began to organize online events. To our great surprise, the participation rate was much greater than at our physical events. Unfortunately, like all libraries, we sometimes suffer from poor attendance at events to which we have dedicated great time, research, and money. Online events, where our expectations for participation are more or less met, provide a balance. Furthermore, we reach a global audience instead of relying solely on local participation. We have organized more than 10 online events every year since 2020. The most popular events are those related to manuscripts.

Digital Exhibitions

Aside from the permanent exhibition area, we organize two temporary exhibitions every year. Sometimes, three are organized, depending on the exhibition size. During the pandemic, we also produced our first digital exhibition titled, "Arab Cinema Posters: Art and Memory Exhibition." It was fully produced internally by the Library's Information Technology staff, a huge feat considering the difficulties we faced during the pandemic. Our team also created "The Holy Kaaba" Online, which was first held as a physical exhibition in QNL in May 2019, before being published on the QNL website as an online exhibition in August of that year, where it is currently still available. A third exhibition, "History of Photography in the Middle East" is scheduled to be available as an online exhibition by the end of 2023.

In contrast to these digital exhibitions, physical exhibitions require a great deal more time and effort in terms of curation, design, production, and mounting the exhibition. Furthermore, these physical

exhibitions are temporary and only last for several months. After seeing the great success of the digital exhibitions, we decided it made sense as part of our preservation and archive efforts to make digital versions of the physical exhibitions. Of course, this also means taking into consideration copyright and approval of all project stakeholders.

“Far From Home: Arab Immigrants in the US”

This exhibition is part of our Art Trail guided tour and was dedicated to celebrating the Qatar-United States Year of Culture 2021. While it is not a digital exhibition, the Heritage Library has used digital archives to support the main content of this exhibition. “Far From Home: Arab Immigrants in the US” showcases Arab immigration to the United States in all its different aspects, such as history, causes, and cultural clashes, using Arab literature born in the US, such as the Arabic Press, and Arab-American stories and writings. The main inspiration for this exhibition came from a book housed within our own collection titled *A Far Journey* by Abraham Mitrie Rihbany. It is one of the first autobiographical accounts of an Arab-American migrant, and was originally published in 1914 in Boston, Massachusetts.

We collaborated with two international institutions for this Art Trail. The first is the Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies, which kindly provided us with the necessary illustrations for the exhibition. The second is the Arab American National Museum (AANM) from which we have two loan items that were on display during the exhibition period. Furthermore, we had the honor of hosting two Arab-American writers, Sarah M.A. Gualtieri and Helen Zughaib, both of whom won the Arab American Book Award in 2021, an annual award ceremony held at AANM. Our opening event for this exhibition was the online lecture *Arab Immigrants: The Pursuit of the American Dream* by Dr. Akram Khater, Laila Lalami, and Dr. Wail Hassan.

Conclusion

In summary, our digital experience at the Heritage Library has been a tremendous amount of work, but it has been very rewarding. We continuously improve our methodologies as we execute our ongoing

digital projects and commit to developing new projects. The Heritage Library's report on the digital transformation experience will examine how far we have come and where we must go to achieve our vision of being a world-class center of learning and research, and to achieve our mission of preserving national and regional heritage.

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**The Story of Middle East Studies Librarianship through the
MELA Notes Archive**

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MELA Notes was born in the fall of 1973 as the official journal of the Middle East Librarians Association. From the very first issue of the journal, the founders of *MELA Notes* recorded the story of Middle East Librarianship through article series and reports. Now, after 50 years, the archive of *MELA Notes* is an invaluable resource for those studying the history of Middle East Studies and Middle East Librarianship all over the world and particularly in North America.

In my presentation on the 50th anniversary of the MELA at the 2022 annual meeting in Denver, I delivered a quick overview of the history of the Middle East Librarians Association and the activities of the founding members as reflected in the *MELA Notes* archive. I also talked about the development of *MELA Notes* throughout the first five decades of its existence. What follows is a revised and condensed transcript of my talk entitled *The Genesis of MELA: The History of the Middle East Librarian Association through the Archive of MELA Notes*.

SONBOLDEL: *The Story of MES Librarianship*

The first issue of *MELA Notes* rolled off Jim Pollock's typewriter in the fall of 1973. It opens: "The Middle East Librarians Association begins to publish *MELA Notes* as part of its reason for being. If this publication will continue to be read, it is because we now encourage you to recall us to our purposes by your contributions and notices, and because you heartily do so."¹⁴⁰

The primary purpose of the first issues of *MELA Notes* was to narrate and document the story of MELA as a newly founded association. So, the history of *MELA Notes* as the formal journal of the association (or, as Pollock said, as part of its reason for being) is intertwined with the story of the creation of MELA. In his article titled *The Genesis of MELA*, David Partington states in the first issue of *MELA Notes* that the story of creating an organization for Middle East librarianship in North America started with a questionnaire. MESA's Research and Training (RAT) Committee, headed by Professor William A. Schorger, asked each MESA Fellow to answer a questionnaire dated April 10, 1968. The questionnaire included questions regarding potential strategies that could help improve library and archival resources for research and training in Middle East Studies.

In response to this questionnaire, Partington writes:

I would respectfully recommend that your Committee [...] assist in setting up an organization for Near Eastern librarians [...]. A step in that direction could be joint-sponsorship with a library school of a symposium on Near Eastern librarianship [...] This symposium would urge, I assume, the creation of a professional organization attached to MESA or functioning within the American Library Association."¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Massaging the Notes, *MELA Notes*, no. 22 (1981): 2–2.

¹⁴¹ Partington, David. "The Genesis of MELA." *MELA Notes*, no. 1 (1973): 9–11. p. 9.

The idea of creating an organization, as Partington says, was raised at the 1967 meeting of the American Oriental Society in New Haven when Dr. Warren Tsuneishi called together a few Middle Eastern librarians in his Park Plaza hotel room to discuss means of cooperation and the need for organization.

In April 1968, MESA's RAT Committee appointed Dr. Labib Zuwiyya Yamak to set up a Sub-Committee to deal with library and bibliographic matters. The mandate of this Sub-Committee was: (a) to deal with all matters relating to Middle Eastern library resources and their bibliographic control, (b) determine the major library needs of Middle Eastern studies, (c) establish, initiate or sponsor projects to meet these needs.¹⁴²

As William Kopycki writes, the topics of librarianship and bibliographical concerns were central from the very start of the Middle East Studies Association conference within the context of MESA's RAT Committee. For the first annual meeting, held December 8-9, 1967, Dr. Labib Zuwiyya Yamak and Dr. David Partington, both of Harvard University, headed a roundtable on the theme of "Library and Bibliographic Problems."¹⁴³ These roundtable discussions continued annually.

These topics, of course, were pursued in the first issues of the *MELA Notes* as well. As a result, more than 70 percent of articles and notes published in the first 20 issues of *MELA Notes* center around the issues of Middle East librarianship as well as related bibliographical

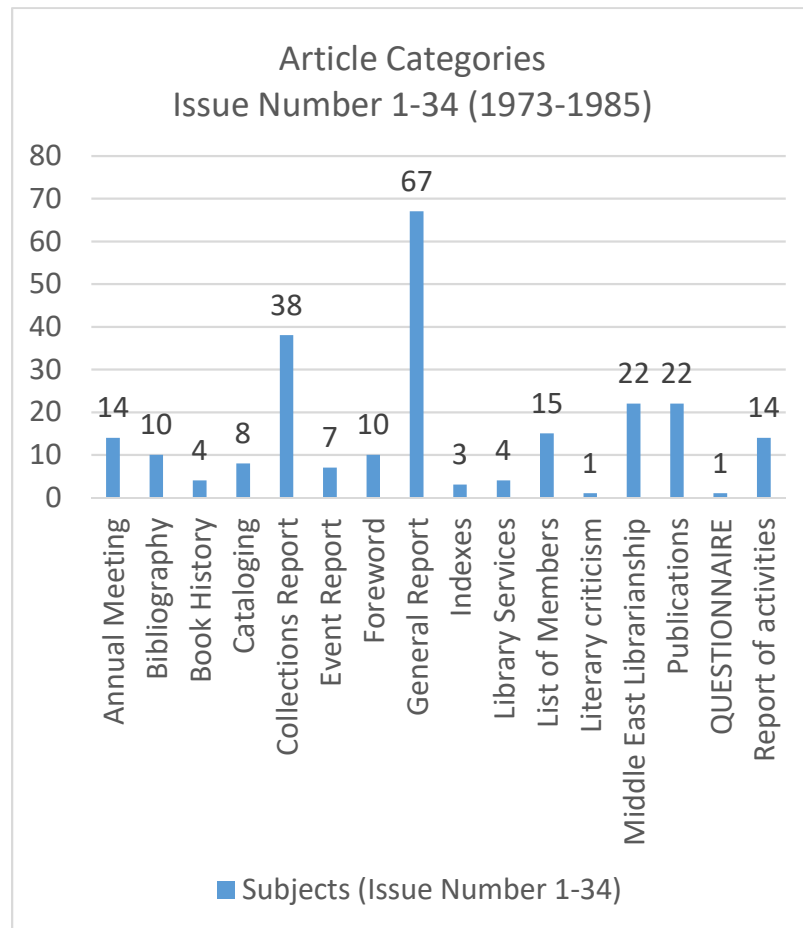
¹⁴² Partington, David. "The Genesis of MELA." *MELA Notes*, no. 1 (1973): 9–11. p. 10

¹⁴³ Key topics included "Resources of American Libraries", and "The PL-480: UAR Program". *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 2.1 (1968): no. 32.

Kopycki, William J. "The Middle East Librarians Association: Cooperation and Participation beyond the Borders." Conference Presentation at Libraries and Specialized Documentation Centers in the Mediterranean and Arabic World Areas Workshop, Seville, Spain, November 29, 2007.

SONBOLDEL: *The Story of MES Librarianship*

concerns. Going forward, by 1985, the number of general reports of the association's affairs, events, and membership activities exceeded the number of articles on bibliographical topics.



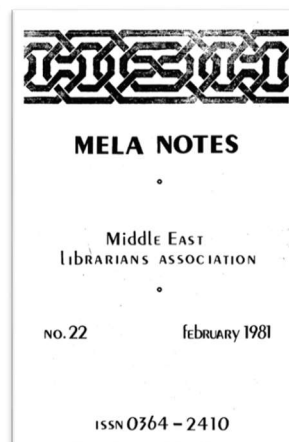
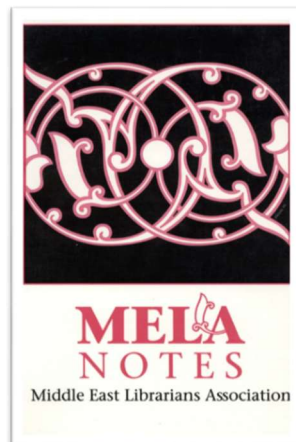
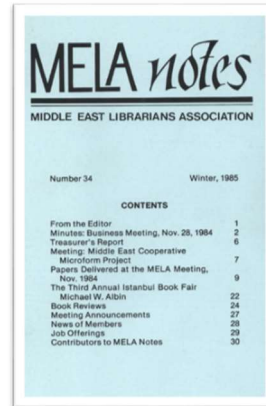
As Kopycki states, "gradually, however, some participants felt that the concerns of the Committee were more oriented towards academics and that there was less of an interest in the technical matters of

librarianship.”¹⁴⁴ Again, referring to the first issues of the *MELA Notes*, one can see that most articles were written in the form of reports intended for the use of academic librarians and faculty. In fact, the first articles that directly reported on technical and cataloging issues were published in *MELA Notes* in 1978. These three articles, which appeared in the 13th issue of the journal published in February 1978, were entitled *Arabic Cataloging: Problems and Progress* by Marsha McClintock, *Automated Processing at the New York Public Library* by Chris Filstrup, and *ALA Sub-Committees on Descriptive Cataloging and Subject Analysis of Asian and African Materials* by Martha Dukas.

However, as time passed, the technical aspects of librarianship became one of the most significant topics in this journal. There were also several articles published in the late 1980s that are considered cataloging milestones. For instance, the article *Romanizing Arabic script catalog records: Trials, Tribulations and Success at Ohio State* by Dona Straley, published in issue number 42, 1987, outlines Ohio State's project to transfer Arabic and Hebrew cards into Romanized script records in OCLC, which were then transferred to Ohio's local OPAC. Another example is the article titled *Establishing Arabic personal names headings* by Katherine Van de Vate, published in issue number 53, 1991, which was a guideline used at Princeton University to eventually form the core guidelines for the Arabic Name Authority Funnel project.

¹⁴⁴ Kopycki's e-mail correspondence with John Eilts, November 8, 2007. Kopycki, *The Middle East Librarians Association: Cooperation and Participation beyond the Borders*. 2007.

SONBOLDEL: *The Story of MES Librarianship*



The first issue of *MELA Notes* was twenty-two pages long. It featured a report on the British Middle East Libraries Committee by Derek Hopwood, an essay in appreciation of Taha Husayn's *Call of the Curlew* written by Kenneth Nolin, and assorted news of activities of library organizations with interests relevant to MELA. In addition to such pieces focused on Middle Eastern librarianship and Middle East studies collections, some report and article series such as *Association chronicle*, *Report to the membership*, *Collation from other library areas touching Middle East interests*, and *Library tours, look-ins and*

notices first published in this issue, were continued in almost all the issues published in *MELA Notes*' first decade. Article series, such as *Reports of acquisition trips* and *Publishing activity in the region*, were also some of the most crucial features of *MELA Notes* in its first two decades. Kopycki writes, "articles on Iran,¹⁴⁵ Syria,¹⁴⁶ Tunisia,¹⁴⁷ and Saudi Arabia,¹⁴⁸ have usually been the first of their kind in English, and have done a great deal to give ideas and strategies for collecting from these and other countries."¹⁴⁹

The journal kept the same format until February 1980, when in issue number 19, the first book review was published. Although number 19 includes only one book review, the number of book reviews increased gradually over the 1980s, reaching up to three reviews in each issue. The significance of book reviews in *MELA Notes* increased over the years to the extent that starting with issue number 60 (published in the spring of 1994) to the present, the journal is basically divided into two major sections: articles and book reviews.

Book reviews, especially from the 1980s to the present, focused more on new books related to Middle East studies, bibliographies, and Middle East librarianship. Book reviews were traditionally authored by MELA members and outside contributors, but in recent years, Ph.D. researchers and graduate students have been among the most active contributors to this section.

¹⁴⁵ Behn, Wolfgang. "Book production in Iraq: its bibliographic control and costs." *MELA Notes*, no. 6 (1975): 10-13.

¹⁴⁶ Abraham, Midhat. "Selection of Library Materials for Middle Eastern Studies from Syria." *MELA Notes*, no. 64 (1994).

¹⁴⁷ Vernon, Elizabeth. "Notes of an Acquisitions Trip to Tunisia, 1994." *MELA Notes*, no. 60 (1994): 11-16.

¹⁴⁸ Day, Mark Taylor. "Report from Riyadh." *MELA Notes*, no. 21 (1980): 5-11.

¹⁴⁹ Kopycki, The Middle East Librarians Association: Cooperation and Participation beyond the Borders. 2007.

SONBOLDEL: *The Story of MES Librarianship*

The physical aspects of the *MELA Notes* have also changed significantly. In an article titled *Massaging the Notes*, the author writes:

[In the very first issues of the *MELA Notes*] the format was as plain as the prose was literary. 8 1/2 x 11, easy to file. Starting with issue 16, the prose, like the times, grew leaner. The 8 1/2 x 11 frame persisted. It seemed appropriate to the task of communicating among the membership and others interested in the nitty gritty of Middle East librarianship. But a vein of opinion to "upgrade" the Notes always existed and in November, 1980 surged to vote out the old and bring in a new format -- smaller, double pages, encovered. What the new magazine format will do to the content of the Notes is uncertain. The new Notes stands up better. It is easier to take to the beach or camping. It is easier to read in the bathtub. Its cover suggests prosperity, and the stapled fold suggests weightier pages. The retooled Notes is assuredly modern in that it reflects a particularly contemporary awareness that form and content are intimates.

The author of this article claims that to upgrade the journal, the editorial board changed the form "with confidence the content will follow." Indeed, the changes in format had a positive impact on the content. Especially in 1995, when the volume of the magazine increased dramatically from about 30 pages to closer to 60-100 pages, articles that until then were primarily short reports by librarians for the use of librarians became longer in terms of word count and broader in subject. This change, in turn, increased the articles' means of contributing to the field of Middle East Studies and boosted their academic value. Moreover, the length of the issues kept increasing up to 150 pages in the 2000s and 2010s.

During the past few years, digitizing the whole series of *MELA Notes* and making them freely available to the public on the MELA website and JSTOR, as well as turning the journal into an Open Access resource, have been the most notable changes in the nature of this journal and a magnificent step towards making it even more visible and accessible. In addition, thanks to our online open-access publication model, today, it takes less than a week for us to publish a book review electronically once the content of the review is edited and prepared for publication.

Finally, I would like to convey my gratitude to the founders of the *MELA Notes* and all my predecessors and thank them for the significant role they played in forming the Middle East Studies librarianship as an academic field. Since 1973, until the time that I took on the position in 2022, nine distinguished librarians and scholars have served as the Editor. *MELA Notes* has also had three Book review editors since 1997. The following is the list of the *MELA Notes* editors from 1973 to the present:

Editors:

James W. Pollock, Indiana University 1973-1978
Chris Filstrup, New York Public Library 1978-1981
Dunning Wilson, UCLA 1981-1984
Basima Bezirgan, University of Chicago 1984-1987
Brenda Bickett, Georgetown University 1987-1991
John Eilts, Research Libraries Group 1991-1994
Fawzi W. Khoury, University of Washington 1994-1997
Jonathan Rodgers, University of Michigan 1997-2007
Marlis J. Saleh, University of Chicago Library 2007-2022
Farshad Sonboldel, UCSB 2022-Present

SONBOLDEL: *The Story of MES Librarianship*

Book Review Editors:

Rachel Simon, Princeton University Library 1997-2021

Farshad Sonboldel, UCSB 2021-2022

Hiba Abid, Public Library of New York 2023-Present

REVIEWS

Muthanna/Mirror Writing in Islamic Calligraphy: History, Theory, and Aesthetics. By Esra Akin-Kivanç. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020. Pp. ix, 335, with bibliography and indexes. ISBN: 9780253049209 (hardback), 9780253049216 (paperback), 9780253049230 (ebook).

Muthanna, or mirror writing, is a popular form of Islamic calligraphy which operates under the principle of symmetrical reflection of a calligraphic text along an axis. Although this art form is well-attested since the early days of Muslim history on a wide variety of objects, including textiles, everyday objects, and buildings, in the scholarly literature it has rarely been investigated and understood as a genre of Islamic art in its own right. Esra Akin-Kivanç aims to remedy this situation by providing a cogent framework for understanding the history and meaning of *muthanna* by examining pre-Islamic influences, its gradual development in Muslim cultures, and its culminating expressions in the heart of the Ottoman Empire.

Akin-Kivanç's central argument is that the art of *muthanna* is closely intertwined with the meaning of the text in that it serves to remind viewers of their relationship to the divine and to facilitate their spiritual return to God. In support of this thesis, Akin-Kivanç observes that only certain types of texts are chosen for *muthanna*, namely, apotropaic expressions, the names and attributes of God, affirmations of monotheism, entreaties to God, and cosmological and eschatological discourses. She also expertly examines the concepts of "mirror," "reflection," and "symmetry" in Islamic philosophy, mysticism, and science to demonstrate the relationship between *muthanna* and the choice of texts.

While readers may not agree with all of the author's conclusions, this book contains groundbreaking research on an art form that has been understudied and poorly understood despite its ubiquitous

Reviews

presence in Muslim cultures. Akin-Kivanç supports her arguments with numerous examples of *muthanna* across a broad range of time and cultures and makes deft use of a wide selection of secondary sources. Her research also raises new avenues of inquiry, such as the reason for the disappearance of mirror-writing in non-Arabic scripts in Late Antiquity, the combination of *muthanna* with non-Islamic iconography during the medieval period, and the interaction between tradition and individual creativity in the development of *muthanna* and Islamic art more generally.

As is to be expected from this publisher, the book is of high-quality production and abounds with full color illustrations. Romanization forgoes diacritics, which is helpful to those readers not familiar with the Arabic script. An extensive bibliography and three indexes round out the book; the index of calligraphic terms should prove particularly useful for readers not well-acquainted with Islamic calligraphy. This book is most appropriate for an academic library, and Akin-Kivanç's thorough explanations of the variety inherent in Islamic beliefs and Muslim cultures should provide adequate contextualization for the non-specialist.

DENISE SOUFI

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Iranian Women & Gender in the Iran-Iraq War. By Mateo Mohammad Farzaneh. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2021. Pp. xix, 457. ISBN: 9780815637103 (paperback).

Mateo Mohammad Farzaneh is an Iranian-native immigrant to the United States. He has a Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara, and he is currently a member of the history faculty at Northeastern Illinois University. He is a recipient of several awards and fellowships, such as the 2016 National History Honor Society's Best First Book Award. In 1982, when he was only fourteen, he was a volunteer, among so many others like him, to defend his nation, Iran, in the Iran-Iraq war as he was able. Twenty-six years after his own activity in the Iran-Iraq war, visiting his home country, he started his research toward writing this book, with very limited access to the

historical primary sources about women's roles and their participation in that war.

This book has two objectives, as the author puts it: "to examine the role of Iranian women in the Iran-Iraq War, and to demonstrate how gender in Iran was affected by their participation in the war." It consists of multiple chapters, starting first with a chronology of several dynasties from the Qajars to Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, and presenting a detailed layout of the chronological events in their reigns. The following chapters deal with the status of women in Iran from 1925 to 1980 and their involvement in wartime.

The author discusses the changes in the roles played by Iranian women because of the Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1988, such as social, political, economic, and cultural changes. These all carried significant influence in the roles they had to take during wartime. Some examples include but are not limited to economic and social stabilization, supporting the front lines in different ways, taking care of families in the absence of their men, getting involved in economic challenges caused by war and international sanctions, and participation in front lines in the war and in the military.

The author examines the reasons behind the involvement of women in wartime through narrated stories and some direct interviews with women who expressed their reasons for such participation and explained their gender roles in the context of war. Without exception, the author claims that all the women whose stories contributed to the content of this book emphasized their sense of patriotic duty in protecting their country and culture. They describe active participation in various fields of war such as being in the combat zone, providing intelligence services, working as war scouts, or delivering medical care to the front lines. They were always ready to work voluntarily and even contributed to the war by donating their jewelry.

Farzaneh analyzes the importance of women's involvement in this war. He says the significance of women's participation in this war is that it was the first time in the modern history of Iran that women stood side by side with men and filled the various roles that they were not allowed to fill prior to the 1980 war. Women dedicated themselves to defending Iran as volunteers either for the sake of the nation or for religious reasons, but none of them expected any material rewards. Another noteworthy fact regarding this war is that women's participation happened during a time that was socially and culturally

Reviews

hostile to them, but they ignored it and participated anyway. Although the Islamic Revolution had created a cultural acceptance of women's participation in the uprisings, after the revolution the theocratic government tried to legally force women to stay at home and prevented their involvement in public affairs, especially in large cities in Iran. This war, however, created an opportunity and an ease in mobility for women to demonstrate their patriotism in an Islamic society, within the Shiite ideology, and to play a role directly or indirectly. Their direct roles and activities in the war were especially prominent in the southern and western parts of the war zone alongside men, in more distant areas their roles were more indirect.

Women's experiences during the eight-year war affected their social and gender roles to a remarkable degree. They had to face complicated situations and carry on in front lines directly, or to adapt themselves to demanding situations in the absence of men. Women took part in managing various aspects of their lives socially and economically, which took a heavy toll on them; however, it shone a spotlight on their abilities to confront barriers in their socio-political lives.

This book mainly concentrates on the hardship of war for women in Iran who have limited roles in making decisions in public affairs and warfare. It documents the changes in their social, political, and military roles in wartime. It is an excellent scholarly work that could fit in any library setting, but primarily academic libraries with collections on cultural studies, Middle East studies, social and political studies, and humanities. It is also an appropriate source for any academic or literary reading with a focus on women and their representations in wartime.

SHAHRZAD KHOSROWPOUR

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

The Last Ottoman Wars: The Human Cost, 1877–1923. By Jeremy Salt. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2019. Pp. xvi, 424, with bibliography and index. \$40.00 (hardcover); \$32.00 (ebook). ISBN: 9781607817048 (hardcover); 9781607817055 (ebook).

The period from the onset of the Russo-Turkish War in 1877 to the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 was a tumultuous one for the Ottoman Empire and its subjects. Jeremy Salt treats these nearly fifty years as a distinct period in Ottoman history defined by a series of military conflicts. His stated goal is to highlight the suffering of Ottoman-Muslim civilians, which he accuses the “‘western’ cultural mainstream” and “‘western’ historians” of ignoring (pp. 2, 80).

The Last Ottoman Wars weaves its way through the war with the Russian Empire, the Young Turk revolution, the Italian War, the Balkan Wars, World War I, and post-war Anatolian and Caucasian conflicts, always with an eye toward their impact on the empire’s Muslim majority. The literature, Salt argues, has paid outsize attention to Ottoman Christians, rendering Muslims invisible (p. ix). To correct for this fault, he provides snapshots of wartime civilian life through archival documents and reports of Ottoman as well as Western provenance, embedding them within broader contextual discussions.

This source base, however, is the book’s most glaring problem. Though Salt wants to focus on the “human cost” of the wars in the late Ottoman period, actual humans are mostly absent. Diaries, memoirs, and other ego-documents are rarely used. Five of those cited directly are written by Ottomans: a translation of Cemal Paşa’s memoirs, the second volume of Halide Edib’s English-language autobiography, the memoirs of a brigadier general, the diary of a corporal, and the memoirs of a reserve officer. (All five cover the WWI and post-WWI periods.) These are doubtlessly useful sources, but they are hardly adequate for a book concerned with Muslim civilians over the course of the empire’s final half century. Granted, these sorts of sources are difficult to come by, especially for the period before the war. Salt admits this in the acknowledgments, citing the low literacy rate as the chief cause of this dearth of material (pp. viii–ix). But his other sources provide little texture beyond statistics and macabre anecdotes. Other Ottomanists, such as Selim Deringil and Yiğit Akın, have managed to get around this problem in their recent monographs.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ See Selim Deringil, *The Ottoman Twilight in the Arab Lands: Turkish Memoirs and Testimonies of the Great War* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019); and Yiğit Akın, *When the War Came Home: The Ottomans’ Great War and the Devastation of an Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

Reviews

Salt does not take the question of sources lightly. In a few instances, he veers into short discussions on the topic, and these are crucial to the book's overall project. He refers—not without a bit of snideness—to the importance of “real” and “genuine” Ottoman archival documents, taking other historians to task for their credulity vis-à-vis narrative sources (pp. 254–55). On its face, his critique is a valid one. Some may take issue with the undercurrent of archive fetishism present in this particular argument, but Salt's stance is well within the norms of Ottoman historiography. What cannot be overlooked, however, is Salt's heavy reliance on compilations of documents rather than on the archive itself. Published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the Turkish Historical Society, the Prime Ministerial State Archives General Directorate, and others, these volumes—bearing titles such as *Archive Documents about the Atrocities and Genocide Inflicted upon Turks by Armenians*, *Documents on Massacre [sic] Perpetrated by Armenians*, and so on—make up a good deal of Salt's primary sources. At no point are Ottoman archival documents cited directly, and the bibliography makes no distinction between archival, primary, and secondary sources. To his credit, Salt does note the necessity of reading archival materials critically (p. 254), but when they bolster his argument, he merely gestures toward skepticism without practicing it. Railing in some places against overdependency on Western diplomatic sources and newspaper reports—another valid point—he leans on them in others.

The Last Ottoman Wars promises to challenge mainstream historiography. Rather than posing such a challenge, it relies in large part on documents curated by institutions of the Turkish state to craft narratives and draw conclusions that come across as old hat to those who have read Salt's past work¹⁵¹ and other studies on similar subjects published by University of Utah Press.¹⁵² A source base as narrow and selective as this could not have produced anything else. Though there are more successful surveys available, the non-specialist—Salt's

¹⁵¹ Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878–1896* (London: F. Cass, 1993); Jeremy Salt, “The Narrative Gap in Ottoman Armenian History,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 1 (2003): 19–36.

¹⁵² Yücel Güçlü, *Armenians and the Allies in Cilicia, 1914–1923* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010); Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005); Justin McCarthy et al., *The Armenian Rebellion at Van* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006).

primary intended audience (p. 8)—can learn much about late Ottoman political history from this volume. Ottomanists, however, will likely have difficulty looking beyond its methodological shortcomings.

ARAM GHOOGASIAN

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Agadir. By Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine. Translated by Pierre Joris and Jake Syersak. Columbia, SC: Diälogos Books, 2020. Pp. 132. ISBN: 9781944884857.

“Should one build on the site of the dead city?” (p. 119) we are asked by the protagonist in Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine’s novel/political essay, *Agadir*. The main character, a government employee, is in Agadir, a city in the south-west of Morocco, to survey the destruction of the historic February 1960 earthquake that destroyed the city’s casbah within 15 minutes and led to the deaths of an estimated 15,000 people. Entire portions of the city became mass graves. The author was himself sent to Agadir in the aftermath of the earthquake as a civil servant and this of course informs his literary work, *Agadir*. The lives of the real survivors were unsettled in a myriad of ways and Morocco, a country that had only just fought for and won its independence from French colonization four years earlier, was forced to make sense of the earthquake as a stark reality and as a metaphor for its own vulnerability.

Segalla considered the earthquake to be “a cataclysmic environmental intervention in the decolonization process,”¹⁵³ as it triggered a further evacuation of French citizens who were still living in Morocco while empowering the Moroccan monarchy to further cement its power over the people. The book *Agadir* is itself unsettled, with moving parts and uncertainties. Prose follows poetry. There are short theatrical scenes which allow for the voices of different kinds of Moroccans to be heard. But the strongest voice is that of the main

¹⁵³ S. D. Segalla, *Empire and Catastrophe: Decolonization and Environmental Disaster in North Africa and Mediterranean France since 1954* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 108.

character trying to make sense of what happened in Agadir in the aftermath of the earthquake (“My first task: Report to my immediate superior; give him a feel for what little hope I have of revitalizing the people here” [p. 29]), and what happened to himself in a long prose digression into his childhood and family dynamics in a Berber (Amazigh) village—“Perhaps I have a history of my own...Was I born? I was born, therefore I live...” And ultimately, the book examines what is happening in Morocco under an authoritarian monarchy, which Khaïr-Eddine repeatedly criticizes and resists. In one scene, a housewife laments, “The king organizes the price increases. The king feeds off the blood of the people” (p. 85).

In the introduction to this English translation of the original French, Khalid Lyamlahy explains that Khaïr-Eddine expected readers to make repeated efforts to engage with his writing. I would suggest at least two readings of *Agadir*. Reading *Agadir* is an interactive exercise in which the reader has to come with some previous knowledge of Moroccan history, culture, politics, and religion, and how those were playing out in 1960s Moroccan society. A reader without such background knowledge should read the book with someone who could provide the explication needed to parse the at times dense text and cultural references. Lyamlahy, a scholar of Khaïr-Eddine’s work, expertly provides context necessary to approach *Agadir*, but that is not necessarily enough to help navigate the book’s direct and indirect allusions to pre-Islamic North African deities, medieval Moroccan monarchs, French colonialism, nascent Amazigh (Berber) nationalism, the turmoil of the “years of lead” when politically active or dissenting Moroccans were taken as enemies of king Hassan II and were disappeared, tortured, imprisoned, and/or executed, and intra-Moroccan politics between secular leftists and the more religiously abiding.

As a part of the corpus of modern Moroccan literature which is itself multi-lingual and manifold, *Agadir* sits in company with the works of noted authors such as Mohammed Zafzaf or even one of Khaïr-Eddine’s co-editors from the journal *Souffles*, AbdelKebir Khatibi. This English translation could speak to an audience of those interested in the immediate post-colonial moment in North Africa. It would certainly work well in a course covering literature from North Africa or the Middle East region or that wanted to balance out ethnographic and political works on the region with literature.

Libraries supporting such programs could consider adding it to their collections.

Agadir is not an easy read, but for those who have an interest in the pivotal traumatic event of the 1960 Agadir earthquake and in the particular post-colonial moment in Moroccan history, when a certain group of young Moroccans used their creative energies to redefine Moroccanness (which for Khaïr-Eddine is tied up in mediations on blood as biology and blood as a social construct for belonging and relatedness), it might be worth the effort Khaïr-Eddine intended for you to extend to access the text.

SUMAYYA AHMED

SIMMONS UNIVERSITY

Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World. By Ussama Makdisi. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019. Pp. xiii, 296, with bibliographical references and index. \$29.95 Hardcover/Paperback. ISBN: 9780520385764.

Dr. Ussama Makdisi's recent publication explores the history of sectarianism and secularism in the Middle East. He strives to demythologize sectarianism in the Middle East through an ecumenical frame which analyses the shifting body-politics of, most prominently Muslims, Christians, and Jews. In order to do this the ecumenical frame not only had to be imagined but also built "out of eclectic Ottoman, European, and Arab materials" (p. 7). The shifting of the balances of power through European encroachment and the Tanzimat reforms created new socio-political issues for the Ottoman Porte and the peoples of the Empire to address.

The title of the book is slightly misleading. In the introduction Makdisi makes it clear that his focus is the Arab Mashriq with passing reference to other regions, e.g., North Africa. Despite this limitation, the book does an excellent job of detailing the causes of the sporadic violence between different ethnic and religious groups of the Empire, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The book is divided into two parts; the first part contains three chapters which work to reverse a popular Orientalist tale that the Middle East is inherently sectarian (and violent). Makdisi begins with

Reviews

the riots and killings on Mt. Lebanon in 1860, noting that “the largest single massacre of Christians in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire across four centuries of Ottoman rule, has not been the subject of a single major study in Arabic” (p. 18). The violence against the Christians of Mt. Lebanon, while appearing to be sectarian, was in fact an episode related more to power shifts and dynamics than to religion (or ethnicity) (p. 55). The second part contains three chapters and an epilogue. While part one deals with defining the region and highlighting episodes of tension and violence, part two is concerned with exploring and analyzing the shifting ecumenical frame as the region and the people contend with European colonialism and, specifically, the European desire to protect Christians in the Middle East. The epilogue discusses the Arab Mashriq from the 1950s to the present and the breakdown of the ecumenical frame, specifically in Palestine.

The Mashriq is often seen and spoken of as a monolith where sectarianism is misconstrued as having been part of the region since time immemorial; Makdisi documents and well-articulates that this is a myth. In fact, the Middle East, especially prior to the nineteenth century, was rather a region where Muslims were granted special status and other religious groups were, more or less, left to their own devices. The entrance of European encroachment in the nineteenth century followed by capitulations of the Ottoman Porte through the Tanzimat reforms (1839–1876) ushered with it a new ecumenical frame in which “Muslim subjects were no longer ideologically privileged in the eyes of the sultan by virtue of their Islamic faith, and yet at the same time were not singled out for protection or alleged solicitude by European powers because they were Muslim” (p. 54). This shift in the equilibrium in turn led to sporadic violence that seemingly was sectarian, but in reality, reflected the changes in the balances of power.

The Age of Coexistence takes aim at Orientalist portrayals of the Arab Mashriq, analyzing and providing ample examples of the coexistence, tolerance, and communal spirit that existed in the region prior to European encroachment and later colonialism. Future studies would do well to explore similar themes that would broaden our understanding of the ecumenical frame in other parts of the region, or in the Mashriq but through the other ethnicities or linguistic groups, as well as the ecumenical citizen in this age of the nation-state. Ultimately, Makdisi has written an excellent book and provided an

innovative theoretical framework for understanding the Arab Mashriq in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

SEAN E. SWANICK

DUKE UNIVERSITY

Réveiller l'archive d'une guerre coloniale : Photographies et écrits de Gaston Chérau, correspondant de guerre lors du conflit italo-turc pour la Libye (1911–1912). By Pierre Schill. Grâne: Créaphis Éditions, 2018. Pp. 478, with illustrations, notes, and bibliography. ISBN: 9782354281410.

À fendre le cœur le plus dur. By Jérôme Ferrari and Oliver Rohe. Arles: Actes Sud, 2017. Pp. 109, with illustrations and notes. ISBN: 9782330086527.

The core of the first book are the reports, correspondence, and photographs of the French author Gaston Chérau (1872–1937), who was a war correspondent sent by the pro-Italian Parisian daily *Le Matin* to Tripoli (26 November 1911–10 January 1912) to cover the Turkish-Italian War. But this is more than publishing Chérau's writing and photographs. The historian Pierre Schill discusses his own first encounter with some of these photographs, which led him to discover their creator and Chérau's extensive collections held in public and private archives. Schill also provides details about Chérau, the background of his dispatch to Tripoli, the main stages of the war, and the reaction to the war in Europe. Unique to this enterprise is the inspiration the collection had on artists (visual art and dance) and authors whose work is discussed and presented. The second book includes the reflections of two authors, who are also mentioned in the first book, based on the collection, relating both to history and current affairs.

Chérau was the second correspondent sent by *Le Matin* to Tripoli after the main Italian invasion came to a standstill. By late November 1911 the Italians were holding just selected areas on the Mediterranean coast and encountered fierce combined Turkish-Arab resistance, which they did not expect and which caused them at times severe casualties. The harsh Italian response to the resistance, resulting in numerous civilians killed, brought about widespread criticism in the

Reviews

European press by journalists who reported from the Turkish-Arab side. *Le Matin*'s aim was to increase public support of Italy in this conflict by having a famous author writing from the war zone. Although Chéreau was reporting mainly from Tripoli, he did visit some places in the neighborhood while he was embedded with the Italian army. Despite his requests, he did not receive the authorities' permission to go also to Cyrenaica, where the war was much more fierce, and this led to his decision to leave after a short while. Due to the timing of his stay in Tripoli and the limited access he had to move around, his 19 published reports (28 November 1911–2 January 1912), in which he glorifies the Italians and criticizes the resistance, do not shed much light on the military and political developments in the region. What is very impressive, though, are his 229 photographs (211 of them from Libya, the rest from his journey), several of which were published in *Le Matin* and some other papers. Standing out are numerous photographs of slain Italian soldiers, Arab combatants, and especially public hangings in a main market in Tripoli of Arabs accused of resisting and murdering Italians. Among the postcards Chéreau sent to his wife and son are also those published by the Italian authorities as part of the war propaganda, carrying photographs of the hangings of Arabs and of Italian casualties, accompanied by notations in Italian, French, and English. Some photographs shed light on civilian life in Tripoli, depicting buildings, markets, and local citizens: adults and children. Chéreau's correspondence with his wife and baby son convey his feelings towards his surroundings and mission as well as his hopes for literary recognition back in France. Chéreau's stay in Tripolitania did not result in much literary production. The book includes the sole exception, a short literary work by Chéreau, using his stay in Tripoli as background: "Sur le trésor des caravanes," which was published in 1926 in a collection edited by Georges Bourdon.

The second part of the book presents thoughts and artistic works inspired by Chéreau's reporting from Libya. Among the topics discussed are colonial wars and the role of embedded journalists in promoting political and military views. Chéreau's work inspired the choreographer Emmanuel Eggermont, who created the performance "Strange Fruit." Another result was the exhibition "À fendre le cœur le plus dur, Témoigner la guerre / Regards sur une archive," which was presented in 2015 in Sélestat (Alsace) and in 2016 in Paris.

The book is organized in a way which makes it easy for readers to get to specific parts: this is achieved by using different page colors for different sections. Thus, for example, Chéreau's photographs are printed on white paper, his reports on yellow, and his correspondence on light blue. The annotations to the photographs are helpful, pointing at times to the relevant reports or letters. Their small gray fonts, though, make them difficult to decipher.

The title of the second book and the exhibition, *À fendre le cœur le plus dur*, is a citation from Chéreau's letter to his wife expressing his feelings resulting from the horrid views he encountered. The reflections of Ferrari and Rohe (the entries are not individually signed) deal in a critical way with numerous subjects, including war journalism, Chéreau's personality, violence resulting from colonial wars and dictatorships, and attitudes towards Europeans and indigenous people.

The written and visual reporting of Chéreau has created impressive publication events, both scholarly and artistic. In addition to the original data, one learns about the investigative search for the materials and their authorship. The data are diligently presented and interpreted and one sees how archival resources can serve as a basis for further political and social thoughts as well as an inspiration for artistic creations.

RACHEL SIMON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

George Atiyeh Award Essay

Ryan Zohar

I am grateful to have received the 2021 George Atiyeh Award, which recognized my achievements as a Middle East studies and library and information science student and allowed me to attend the 2021 virtual conference. The world of Middle East librarianship was one I had admired from afar, but this was my first MELA conference and my first real foray into the wider community of Middle East subject specialists and professionals. Like many in the profession, my path toward librarianship was not a smooth or straightforward one, but, having found mentorship and support from librarians at my academic institutions, it was one that excited me greatly. I have to say, beyond my own research consultations with subject specialists as an undergraduate, it was an ice cream metaphor that caught my eye. I remember reading the words of David Hirsch detailing the aspects unique to area studies librarianship that often gets overlooked by English-centric library science literature. In a world where standard subject-matter librarianship might be seen as vanilla-flavored ice cream, he argued, area studies librarianship was decidedly a “rocky road.” I wanted to join this effort to work with print cultures and manuscript traditions often underrepresented in Anglo-American academia. And, I have found in MELA a cadre of colleagues alongside whom I could do just that.

The 2021 virtual conference’s theme was “Reimagining Middle East Studies librarians and archivists’ role(s) in a time of social and political crisis.” Truly, it could not have been timelier. A good portion of my graduate coursework, as well as my full-time job, were by that point remote as the world was faced with (the still ongoing) COVID-19 pandemic that radically disrupted our social and professional relationships with the “physical” be it our collections, public spaces, loved ones, and more. As the conference’s program noted, this rupture

also “heightened (sic) digital divides and exacerbated existing inequalities in the access to information.” The annual meeting occurred, too, at a time when library and information science professionals were reckoning with their own commitments to social justice in the wake of the brutal murder of George Floyd in mid-2020 and the subsequent Black Lives Matter Protests.

While the decision to hold the conference virtually came at the cost of unique in-person meetings and networking opportunities, it also gave flexibility to attendees for whom physical attendance would not be an option. It also the widened possibilities of attendance to our colleagues overseas for whom travel to attend could be cost-prohibitive or a bureaucratic nightmare. Looking back at my notes from the conference, it is clear that the pandemic had not just affected the format of the conference but was also central to the content of the vast majority of presentations. The pandemic had highlighted, or even exacerbated, concerns raised by the Education Committee and Social Justice Committee around “precarity and scarcity in Middle East Librarianship.” As an aspiring area studies librarian, being faced with the workplace concerns and professional trends raised in the roundtable was important to me. I was very much excited to join colleagues as a part of the profession, but I did not want to approach my entry into Middle East librarianship naively. This roundtable instilled in me important critical sensibilities that I still think about today.

I was similarly excited by the Digital Scholarship Interest Group’s (DSIG) roundtable and panels. Personally, I am interested in the applications of digital tools and computational methods in humanistic work in Middle East studies and how librarians can be at the forefront of these developments. The roundtable, though, forced me to take an important step back and ask, as they did, “Digital Scholarship: Who’s It For?” As is the case more broadly within many disciplines, definitions of the “digital humanities” proliferate and often diverge considerably. So, it is no less important with Middle East librarianship than with other disciplines to step back and ask, “What are we *really* talking about? And, to whom might it be of use?”

Among the highlights of the conference, for me, though, were the vendor showcase and the Library of Congress reports. In library school, one can study collection development, cataloging, reference, etc, more generally, yet graduate programs in library science rarely veer into how these different facets of librarianship apply to area studies subject specialists. As a result, you really just have to *be there* and learn on the job. I find this especially true on the acquisitions side of Middle East librarianship. It is difficult to truly get a sense of it until you are thrown into it yourself. I was grateful to have had the opportunity to process and copy catalog Middle East materials at New York University, Division of Libraries, under my mentor Guy Burak. So, when I got the chance to hear from the vendors (Library of Congress, LeilaBooks, Libra, etc.) whose *many, many* boxes of shipments I had opened, it allowed me to get a sense of the wider picture and to see how our vendor partners were weathering the storm.

Most of all, though, the conference served as an invaluable opportunity for me to introduce myself to the MELA community. I had many great conversations and was able to connect with countless members whose work I had read and with whom I dreamed of one day collaborating on projects. I lost count of the times I stopped myself from blurting out, “You might not know me, but I know who you are, and I love your work!” In the year and a half since the conference, quite a lot has changed both in the world and for me. Some of those early introductions have since flourished into partnerships. With the financial support of MELA, I completed my graduate degrees in Library & Information Science at Long Island University and in Near Eastern Studies at New York University, where I focused on the history of publishing in the Arab world. I worked a short stint as Librarian at the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C., and have since settled into a role as the Middle East Studies Librarian at Georgetown University, where I continue to benefit from the advice and mentorship of many MELA colleagues. MELA, both formally through the award and conference attendance and less formally through its members’ kindness and guidance, was central to allowing me to get to where I am today. May the journey not end here. Here’s to many adventures yet to come! I am especially grateful to the Dr. George N. Atiyeh Prize Committee Members: Aicha Azzaoui, Maurice Hines, Guy Burak, and chair Leili Seifi for this honor.

George Atiyeh Award Essay

Ayah Elkossei

I had the honor of accepting the George N. Atiyeh Prize during the 2022 Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) Conference and the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) Conference. These were, in fact, the first conferences I've attended, making my experience all the more personal. Indeed, I am exceedingly grateful to the people of the MELA and MESA communities for opening my eyes to the expansive world of Middle Eastern librarianship.

As a current graduate student of both Archival Management and History, I have noticed throughout my studies that the number of Middle Eastern archivists was limited. Often when I had to conduct research on Middle Eastern people in Chicago for any of my graduate classes, the number of resources was scarce. This is one of the many problems that come from the lack of Middle Eastern presence in American history. When I attended the MELA conference, even though I was new, everyone welcomed me into this tightly-knit community of like-minded people. With communities like these, we can build more of a presence in the field of libraries and archives.

Since this was its 50th Anniversary, MELA tied the past with the present and the future, having their panelists tie into this theme. Just like the figures we know as the founders of MELA came together in 1972, we gathered around each other, listening to the other's ideas of current and future librarianship. Hearing Fawzi Abdulrazak reminisce on the early days of MELA, the comradery he had with other MELA members, and the passion he still has for Middle Eastern library sciences motivated me to do more for our community.

There were many talks that were interesting, and I could see these ideas being implemented into many future archival projects. One of the talks I was captivated by was "The Digital Library of the Middle East (DLME)" by Jacob Hill. He talked about how DLME could be a

new way of creating more access to Middle Eastern archives and gathering collections from different kinds of backgrounds. The DLME has been successful in the past five years, using an adaptable technology stack and collaborating with subject matter experts to improve metadata and curatorial experience. This panel gave me a particular glimpse into digital preservation projects.

Another presentation I really found fascinating was the “Digital Scholarship Interest Group Workshop: Introduction to Arabic OCR” by Jonathan Parkes Allen and Dale Correa. This workshop showed the attendees how to use OCR/HTR software to apply optical recognition and handwritten text recognition to digitized images of Arabic script texts; it also provided tips for digitization, image processing, and management of training models and OCR data. It was astounding to witness this software recognize Arabic text of different styles and transcribe the words. Since Arabic is such a beautifully complicated language, it is indeed impressive that this kind of program exists.

In addition to going to the MELA Conference, I’ve also enjoyed attending the MESA Conference; there were so many historical topics that I thoroughly enjoyed listening to, from tracing the genealogical ties between the women within the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH)’s time to inquiring why Egyptian dish (molokhia) was beloved by some and not all.

One of many topics discussed that piqued my interest in Middle Eastern history was the first panel I attended - “Mothers and Matrilineal Lineages in the Early Islamic World.” This topic explored the patriarchal nature of Islamic society and how it influenced various aspects of life, including household politics, inheritance, and naming conventions. However, these panelists have challenged these ideas by focusing on matriarchal and enatic lineages played in early Islamic society. The papers in this panel explore the social, political, and economic roles mothers and matrilineal lineages played and the power mothers held in Islamic society. Dr. Elizabeth Urban’s topic drew me in, and it helped me appreciate her work in trying to track the familial ties of Sumayya bint Khayyāt, Jamīla bint Thābit, Umm Sulaym bint Milhān, Khawla bint al-Manzūr, and Asmā’ bint Salāma.

Another panel that I appreciated listening to was “Cookbooks and Their Writers: Culinary Diasporas and Middle Eastern Imaginations.” All the papers in this panel examined how cookbooks and their writers have shaped diasporic identities, focusing on Middle Eastern cuisines and foodways. Andrew Haley’s paper really intrigued me; he showed his audience that these Mississippian cookbooks of the 1800s traced Arabic roots through “cabbage tamales.” This paper is an example of how we can trace the Middle Eastern influence on American history.

The conferences were great successes, providing a stimulating and intellectually rewarding experience for all attendees. I was inspired by all the ideas discussed in both the MELA and MESA Conferences. The organizers deserve special commendation for their excellent planning and execution, ensuring that the conferences ran smoothly and efficiently. I would like to thank MELA for providing me with the opportunity to attend this conference and report on my experiences. I would also like to also thank the George N. Atiyeh Award committee - Leila Seifi, Aicha Azzaoui, Maurice Hines, and Guy Burak - for selecting me for this celebrated award. I hope this report will inspire others to attend similar conferences in the future and contribute to the advancement of Middle Eastern librarianship.

MELA 2021 Business Meeting

October 29, 2021

10:30am EST

Via Zoom

Members in attendance: AJ Robinson, Akram Habibulla, Ali Houissa, Amal Morsy, Amanda Hannoosh Steinberg, Anais Salamon, Andras Riedlmayer, Arthur Decker, Asuman Tezcan Mirer, Balsam Haddad, Brenda Bickett, Carol V Jarvis, Dale J. Correa, Daniel Anger, David Faust, David Wrisley, Deborah Schlein, Denise Soufi, Edward A. Jajko, Eiman Elnoshokaty, Eve Lauria, Evyn Kropf, Farshad Sonboldel, Fehl M. Cannon, Gayle Fischer, Guy Burak, Heather Hughes, Huda A. Dayton, Imad Abuelgasim, Iman Dagher, Joan S. Weeks, Jonathan Rodgers, Justin Parrott, Keith Weimer, Leili Seifi, Magda Fathy Gad, Marlis Saleh, Michael A. Toler, Michael Hopper, Mozhgan Jalalzadeh, Neda Zeraatkar, Nedim Bali, Nora Avetyan, Peter Magierski, Rachel Leket-Mor, Roberta L Dougherty, Rustin Zarkar, Ryan Zohar, Sarah DeMott, Sean Swanick, Shahrzad Khosrowpour, Sharon Clarice Smith, Sohaib Baig, Sumayya Ahmed, Susan Lane, William Kopycki, Yasmine Abou-El-Kheir.

President Robin Dougherty called the meeting to order at approximately 10:30am. She delivered the presidential address which was delivered as follows:

“Once again, I welcome you all to the MELA annual business meeting.

“Because we are meeting for the second time in this all-online format, it’s no longer possible to call it “unprecedented.” Last year everyone stepped up with grace and enthusiasm. This year I am delighted to know that our meeting registrations increased over last year’s, and again, you have all stepped up to participate

with the same grace and enthusiasm. We all hear a lot about “Zoom fatigue,” and I feel I know it well. On the other hand, this new environment has made it possible for us to achieve greater access and participation than ever before. I know that those of us who remember the “before times” at MELA are missing the in-person camaraderie, but let’s take a moment to really appreciate what the new situation really means for us. By going all-online (and particularly by going with free registration), we have gained a diversity of participation that we doubted was even possible before. I sincerely hope we can find a way to keep this unexpected momentum into future meetings.

“Last year when we met, we hoped for a return to in-person participation in 2021; this year we find ourselves still grappling with the outcomes of the global pandemic, economic and political uncertainty, and the urgent need to address racial and social justice issues. In the SJC’s session on Monday morning, a number of us talked frankly about precarity in our work, and about being asked to take on additional responsibilities due to retirements or resignations.

“As you have heard from the reports of committee chairs and officers, while the last two years have brought many challenges, MELA persists in its mission to support library professionals and those interested in ME librarianship. With the approval of the EB the new MELA BAC was successfully launched and has made its first awards, and MELA’s several other committees have continued to diligently pursue their work as charged. The MELA Metrics Group will give a fuller report and update, with plenty of time for questions about the new MELA statistics-gathering tool they have designed, at 1 p.m. EDT.

“I apologize if my next comments are businesslike more than inspirational, but I must make a few things very clear about committee work. According to our bylaws, committee service is

a **privilege** of MELA membership. Non-members may not serve on MELA committees. There is only one exception: the Partington Award committee includes a non-MELA member (who must be a member of MESA). If you are asked to do MELA committee work, you should expect to enjoy the full benefits of MELA membership. Or, you should expect to be paid—the past year’s social justice work has highlighted the importance of paying for expertise, as the SJC has done for the speakers in this committee’s series of talks.

“When you join a committee, you are committing to a two-year term of service (this is also in the bylaws). Committee chairs serve as chair for one year and must give way in favor of a new chair in the following year. You may not be a member of more than two committees, and you may not chair more than one committee at a time. These provisions, established years ago, ensure equity in MELA’s organizational life, making it easier for newer members to join committees and even to lead them. If you are a member in good standing looking for an opportunity to participate actively in MELA, I urge you to heed the calls that will soon be coming to MELANET for committee participation. With the exception of the ConC (which has already chosen its new chair), all established MELA committees should review their line-ups to ensure compliance with the bylaws, and notify the EB of their new chairs as soon as possible after the conclusion of the business meeting.

“Last but not least, I leave you as the only living MELA member to have served three times as president of MELA. There is still time for the rest of you. I have been singing the song of anticipation for MELA’s 50th anniversary for several years, and I offer my promise of all my efforts to ensure a worthy commemoration to all present. I hope that MELA members and the entire EB will join in.”

2020 Minutes: The meetings of the 2020 Business meeting, circularized on MELANET-L prior to this meeting, were approved.

MELA Award Committee Announcements

George N. Atiyeh Prize: Leili Seifi (chair) read the report as follows: The George N. Atiyeh Award is an annual affair in hopes of recognizing aspiring Middle East subject specialist librarians. This year's committee decided to extend the call for applicants to other institutions in the region. So the committee distributed the call through all international network such as IFLA-L, Iranian LIS forums, SIG-III, ASIS & T, Middle East Chapter and also all ALA accredited institutions, other institutions in Middle East. After two reminding received six applications, most of them were worthy of this valuable award. Therefore, the committee awarded two exceptional applicants Ryan Zohar and Mehdi Rahmani.

Ryan Zohar currently studying in the part of Dual MA/MSLIS at the Palmer School of Library and Information Science and New York University and in the MA Program in Near Eastern Studies at the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies. He has strong work experiences on LIS and other related subject to Middle East studies. He published many academic works and some of his papers selected as best papers. Furthermore, he achieved many scholarship and awards from prestige's associations such as Atla Diversity Scholarship, ALA ProQuest Spectrum Scholarship, Departmental Honors in Middle Eastern, South Asian & African Studies and so on.

Mehdi Rahmani is Ph.D. student in Information Science at the University of Tehran in Iran. He has served as chair of the LIS student's association for several years. He has studied both bachelor and master on LIS and during his student life

contributed to the field in many ways such as collaboration with students, researchers, and librarians and conducted workshops and scientific conferences. He has published many articles in the reputed journals and presented articles in the international conferences. He also collaborated at the research projects. Furthermore, He achieved many awards during his student's life such as distinguished young researcher and so on.

Wilkins Award: Dale Correa, chair, presented the report. This year's call for applications resulted in an impressively competitive pool. The Wilkins Award committee is delighted to announce that Neda Zeraatkar and Rustin Zarkar are the winners of this year's competition.

Neda Zeraatkar is the Middle East and Islamic Studies Librarian for Emory Libraries. With the Wilkins Award, Neda will complement the theoretical knowledge of cataloging that she has built since starting her position by forming a mentor relationship with a MELA professional who would supervise her cataloging in order to help her get the practical experience that she needs. This award will help to cover travel expenses to the mentor's institution, and Neda has already identified several wonderful MELA members with whom to work.

Rustin Zarkar, Middle East and Islamic Studies Librarian at UNC-Chapel Hill, will use the award to support digitization and cataloging training necessary for his work as the co-investigator for a two-year Modern Endangered Archives Project (UCLA Libraries) to digitize at-risk materials held at Sufi shrines on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. He also hopes to develop his international fieldwork experience through a mentoring relationship with two library professionals in Peshawar and with a visit to the Islamabad Office of the Library of Congress.

MELA Book Award Committee: Robin Dougherty spoke on behalf of the committee. "The MELA Book Award Committee (BAC) is charged by the MELA Executive Board (EB) to choose one or more outstanding work(s) related to Middle East studies librarianship, the history of Middle East libraries/scholarship, or other topics congruent with the mission of MELA. The Committee has considered publications from the last three copyright years (2018-2021). The Committee received 18 nominations of books published in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

The MELA Book Award Committee has decided to award the first MELA Book Award to two publications:

Said alJoumani's *Mataba Madrasiyya fi Halab: al-Daftar al-Mujaddad li-Kutub Waqf 'Uthman Basha al-Duriki* (Beirut: OIB, 2019) is a remarkable study of the manuscripts endowed to the library of the madrasa of 'Uthman Pasha in Aleppo in the eighteenth century. The book makes an invaluable contribution to the study of the history of manuscripts and libraries in Greater Syria, the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East.

Bülent Özükan's Tarihte İstanbul Haritaları (Istanbul: Boyut Yayın Grubu, 2020) is a bilingual (Turkish-English) collection of historical maps of Istanbul (mostly from the 14th through the 19th centuries). The study covers works by major Ottoman and European cartographers, mainly English, French, German and Russian as well as Italian, Greek, Armenian, Hungarian and Swedish. Each map is thoroughly annotated. Also included are surveys about the cartographers, their nations and latter's relations with the Ottomans. The maps were collected from more than 50 national, university and municipal libraries as well as museums and private collections, following which thorough research, writing and setting were conducted. This is a magnificent publication, rich in visual and scholarly contents, of

interest to historians, cartographers, urban studies specialists and ethnographers as well as any map and book lovers.

In addition to the winners, the Committee decided to make three honorary mentions:

Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3-1503/4) (edited by Gülru Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar and Cornell H. Fleischer, Leiden: Brill, 2019) is a detailed study of the palace library of the Ottoman sultan Bayezid II. *Treasures of Knowledge* makes an indispensable contribution to the study of the history of libraries and manuscripts in the Ottoman and the early modern Islamic world.

Nourane Ben Azzouna's Aux origines de classicisme: calligraphes et bibliophiles au temps des dynasties mongoles (les Ilkhanides et les Djalayirides, 656-814/1258-1411) (Leiden: Brill, 2018) is a meticulous study of book production and calligraphy in the Ilkhanid and Jalayirid period. In addition, *Aux origines de classicisme* is the most detailed study to date of the key figures in the Islamic calligraphic tradition.

Konrad Hirschler's Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture: The Library of Ibn 'Abd al-Hadi (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019) is a detailed study of a late medieval Damascene library. The study breaks new methodological and conceptual grounds in the study of Middle Eastern manuscript libraries from the Medieval period to the present.

Committee Chair reports

Nominating Committee: AJ Robinson presented the report. They thanked all the candidates and members who participated in the 2021 Executive Board election. Through the hard work of the committee the voting took place as scheduled and resulted in the incoming officers voting in as follows: Vice President/Program Chair: Mohamed Hamed; Webmaster: Justin Parrot and Member at Large: Salma Abumeeiz.

Digital Scholarship Interest Group: Evyn Kropf gave the report on behalf of the group. Over the past year, DSIG held six virtual meetings. They maintained the MELA DSIG listserv / discussion list (all members of the Interest Group) intended especially for circulating opportunities for training and community building (such as conferences and workshops), news of projects and initiatives, features of tools and approaches, requests for advice, and other relevant topics.

In October 2021, DSIG planned and hosted a roundtable “Digital Scholarship: Who’s it For?” for MELA 2021 annual meeting; the roundtable was attended by more than 50 participants. This event aimed to open a conversation about the intended participants in, and the audience for, digital scholarship in Southwest Asia and North Africa. Centering the perspectives of people from or working in the Middle East, invited colleagues from institutions in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates gave short presentations from their experiences engaging with digital scholarship.

DSIG continues to liaise between MELA and the OpenITI Arabic-script OCR Project (OpenITI AOCP) and related initiatives.

Committee on Cataloging: Iman Dagher gave the report on the committee's various activities, organized as follows. ConC Website: To fulfill its mission, one of the committee's priority goals for this year was to improve its online space (content and look) to provide our MELA community with an organized, easy-to-navigate, and resourceful page. The new website was launched in September; all members worked hard on revising the content and adding more resources. In addition to Arabic and Persian, we were able to add cataloging resources for other languages such as Armenian and Urdu. Pavel Angelo's worked on the design of the new website and on the files migration.

The Persian Group: In realizing the need to maintain consistency with cataloging Persian materials, ConC launched a discussion group to provide a platform for issues pertinent to Persian language cataloging and Persian librarianship.

NACO Persian Manual: Some committee members, along with other Persian catalogers, have worked on creating a Persian NACO Manual. The work is near completion and will be shared soon with the MELA community and experts for feedback.

Wikidata: ConC realized the shift to linked data in libraries and the interest to explore in Wikidata as a linked open data platform. A working group has been launched and participant's members met once. The next step will be to: draft a charge, consider training opportunities, and explore possibilities of a pilot to experiment with using Wikidata to describe materials related to the MENA region.

ConC Programs – MELA Conference 2021: The committee was able to organize two hours and half and held a program with 3 sections:

1. Workshop, “Subject Analysis Workshop” by Margaret W. Hughes, Metadata Librarian for Africana, Social Sciences & Humanities; Head, Classification Unit; Team Lead, Metadata Creation Unit, Stanford Library.

2. Panel: Toward Access and Discovery, with two presentations:

--“Cataloging manuscripts in the IFLA-LRM model,” by Dr. Jean N. Druel, OP, Researcher at the Dominican Institute, Cairo.

--“Wikidata and Libraries, a Potential Platform to Explore,” by Iman Dagher, Arabic & Islamic Studies Metadata Librarian, UCLA Library.

3. Round Table: Cataloging Issues in OCLC

--“Unicode in OCLC: what can go wrong?” by Pavel Angelos, Metadata Librarian, Arabic Specialty at Princeton University Library; which included an open discussion on problems with cataloging.

Arabic NACO Funnel Statistics: (October 2020 – October 2021), created 270 new name authority records AND revised 447 new name authority records.

Update from CC:AAM (Magda Gad): ALA-LC Romanization tables review and approval process resumed in May 1, 2021 with the new *Revised Procedural Guidelines for Proposed New or Revised Romanization Tables*. A Review Board was established with representatives from LC, CC:AAM, and CC:DA. Additionally, Review Subcommittees are appointed to coordinate the review and approval of Revised Procedural Guidelines for Proposed New or Revised Romanization Tables Romanization on a specific Romanization table proposal

submitted in an attempt to work collaboratively with language and subject experts in the communities. Currently in review are updates of the Japanese, Macedonian, and Armenian Romanization Tables.

Social Justice Committee: Asuman Tezcan presented the report. The first session of the SJ lecture series, entitled “Stories and Silences: Research on Race in the Middle East,” hosted ten lecturers from September 2020 to July 2021. They invited faculty members and library professionals who work on race and racism in the Middle East broadly defined and/or Diasporas. To show gratitude for the lecturers’ time and effort, they offered a 250 USD honorarium to each lecturer. To be able to pay an honorarium, the Committee launched a GoFundMe campaign and announced it broadly on MELA and social media platforms. The fundraising campaign met the goal in three weeks, and we reached 2500 USD.

The lecture series received a great deal of attention over the last year from the MELA members and outside participants. The SJC aimed to connect MELA with a broader audience, and we were happy to see that our audience was not only from the US, but also from Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. We had attendees from 46 different countries, such as India, Turkey, Lebanon, France, Israel, Malaysia, Russia, Qatar, South Africa, Sudan, Palestine, Kenya, Egypt, Japan, and many others. The highest attendance was the first lecture and it reached two hundred attendees. The average attendance was 94 people over ten lectures.

The Committee was honored to host Dr. Lanisa Kitchener, Head, African and Middle Eastern Division, Library of Congress as a keynote speaker of the 2020 MELA Annual Meeting.

In 2021-2022, the SJC will organize the second season of the lecture series. The theme of the lecture series will be “Neutrality, Heritage, Colonialism, and Diversity in Middle East Libraries and Archives.” In a shift from last year, the Committee decided to focus on Middle East librarianship and information professionals. Again, the Committee launched a new GoFundMe campaign to offer honorariums for our lecturers, so far, we have reached 1415 USD. They expect the MELA community will show an increased interest in the lectures and support the GoFundMe campaign this year. The committee is almost done with organizing the lecture series and will start announcing the lecturers and their topics soon in MELANet and other social media venues.

Education Committee: Sarah DeMott (chair) gave the report of the committee’s activities, highlighted as follows: Mentorship Program: three new pairs of mentors/mentees were added in 2021. During the MELA Annual Conference 2021, the committee hosted a round table entitled “Strategies for Working through Times for Precarity and Scarcity in Times in Middle East Librarianship”. This was a collaboration between the Social Justice Committee and Education Committee. The committee plans to submit a summary of the content roundtable for publication to *MELA Notes*

The committee hosted a workshop on Careers in Middle East Librarianship in December 2021. The event took place through Robin Dougherty’s coordination with the MESA Conference Program Committee, which generated the opportunity for a MELA/MESA partnership. Panelists include chair: Dale J. Correa, University of Texas, Austin; Panelists: Emily Witsell, Wofford College, Mohamed Hamed, Stanford University; Joan Weeks, Library of Congress; Salma Abumeeiz, UCLA; Amanda Hannoosh Steinberg, Harvard University; with coordination by Sarah DeMott, Harvard University.

Endangered Libraries and Archives Committee: It was announced that members interested in serving on this committee should contact Guy Burak for more information.

MELA Executive Board Officer Reports:

Secretary-Treasurer: William Kopycki presented the report. From the treasurer's side: There were several important accomplishments, notably with the association's GoFundMe account which is currently used as a channel of fundraising for the Social Justice Committee. In late spring, GoFundMe used have a platform for charities, called GoFundMe for Charities. SJC's first and part of second campaign was run on this. At some point, William lost administrative access to this account as GoFundMe for Charities was not allowed outside the United States. Not long after this, GoFundMe started sending the money to MELA's PayPal account, which triggered PayPal to request that MELA become a PayPal Confirmed Charity in order to receive these funds. William provided PayPal with proof that MELA is a 501(c)(3) charity, which was then approved. He is working with Asuman to reconcile all funds to ensure that SJC has correct balances.

MELA accounts are otherwise in very good shape, however, it remains to be seen what the cost of holding on-site meetings will be in the future, especially if MELA decides to follow a hybrid model. He noted that one-off projects for MELA that help build infrastructure to the association such as the website re-design from a few years ago, or more recently, the MELA Stats project, are far easier to find funds for than for proposals for awards, fellowships and grants, which do require some sort of sustained

funding and should come from a plan for outside or other sources of funding.

***MELA Notes* Editor:** Marlis Saleh gave the report. Last year's issue of *MELA Notes* (number 92, 2019) was created and posted online in 2020 but the print issues were not produced then due to logistical issues of production, shipping, and receiving physical items facing those of us working remotely. In May of 2021 Marlis decided that it was possible to produce and mail out the print edition.

This was followed immediately by the annual issue of *MELA Notes*, number 93 (2020), which was published and appeared electronically at <http://www.mela.us/publications/mela-notes/mela-notes-archive/>. The print issue was also produced and distributed to the membership and subscribers.

The upcoming issue (number 94, 2021) will likewise be published electronically and in print and will consist of the following items:

- Articles
- Book Reviews
- Award Announcements and Essays
- MELA Business Meeting 2020 Minutes and Reports

All book reviews that will be published in the 2021 issue have been posted online in MELA's blog, the *MELA Notepad*. Reviews are edited and 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 93, 2020) 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

\$4,050.77 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 93 (2020) 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.

Finally, Marlis reported that MELA's book review editor of many years, Rachel Simon, has decided to step down from that role. She added however that MELA member, Farshad Sonboldel, the recently-appointed Middle East Studies Librarian and Area Studies Collection Strategist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has agreed to accept that responsibility.

***MELA Notes* Book Review editor:** Farshad Sonboldel introduced himself as the new book review editor, assuming the responsibilities following Rachel Simon's resignation after servicing MELA for over twenty years. He reported that he will circularize lists of books received for review, and that potential reviewers can contact him to receive their copies with the understanding that reviews need to be completed and sent within six months' time.

Webmaster/Web & Social Media Committee: Justin Parrott gave the report, which was primarily metrics primarily metrics and their contextualization as follows:

Usage statistics for MELA website (with comparison against 2020's metrics):

- +20,000 views (about the same as previous year)
- 10,401 unique visitors (increase by +1,000)
- 3,321 hits from Google (increase by about 500)
- 850 hits from Facebook (slight decrease)
- 756 hits from Twitter (slight increase)
- 62% views from the US (slight decrease)
- 107 countries visited the site

Security updates: the Anti-spam implementation during this year is working. Additional security notes and contingencies are mentioned in the Webmaster officer's manual, shared with the rest of the Executive Board.

Promoting MELA activities: Justin worked to publish book reviews, promote Social Justice Committee lecture series, publish book reviews, and promote Social Justice Committee lecture series, and post statements on matters important to justice in libraries.

Social media accounts (metrics compared against those of 2020):

- 3,428 followers on Facebook (increase by +300)
- 2,241 followers on Twitter (increase by +600)
- About top 5% of Twitter users in terms of followers
- 92 YouTube subscribers (not unexpected for our low use)

MELA Metrics Working Group:

- Newly-launched statistics website added to homepage
- Mohamed Hamed will present the details during the annual meeting

Reminders to MELA members:

- Committee chairs to send updates
- Notify of inaccuracies or typos on the site

- Presenters to send slides, materials, etc.
- Members to send content to SMC and MELANET

Vice-President/Program Chair report: Anaïs Salamon gave her report. This year, the Programming Committee had three members: Salma Abumeeiz (UCLA), Magda El-Sherbini (OSU) and Anaïs. She thanked both Salma and Magda for their hard work, as well as everyone else who was closely involved in the planning/hosting of the conference: Justin Parrott, William Kopycki, and Robin Dougherty.

The committee was able to schedule seven sessions in addition to the standing MELA sessions (Library of Congress Reports, Business meeting, Vendors' Showcase and Committee meetings). Huge thanks go to 1. Committee Chairs and Members for the engaging, insightful, and inspiring roundtables and programming they put together and 2. Panelists and speakers for their participation to these events. She invited presenters to consider submitting their papers for publication in MELA Notes, and for this they can contact MELA Notes editor Marlis Saleh.

Anaïs noted that the online format and free registration allowed over 180 individuals to join our various sessions from approximately 20 countries in North America, Europe, North Africa, and the broad Middle East. The past two years have forced the association to explore new ways to connect, and along the way, the executive board discovered that online conferencing increases and widens participation in our annual conference, and that this was something to keep in mind for future years.

New business/announcements

- President Robin Dougherty convened the 2022 Bylaws Committee, charging its chair (Iman Dagher) to make a

review of MELA's bylaws and suggest any changes in accordance to the schedule.

- President Robin Dougherty convened the 2022 Program Committee, chaired by newly-elected Mohamed Hamed, and charged him with carrying out the work in planning the 2022 meeting, noting that this meeting will be MELA's 50th anniversary.

The meeting concluded at approximately 12:00pm EST.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Kopycki
Secretary-Treasurer