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**44th MELCom International**

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Abstracts

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**Session 1: Ottoman Studies and Collections**

**An Introduction to the Collections of the Bibliothèque d’études Ottomans**

**Meriç Tanık |** Chargée de ressources documentaires, Collège de France, France

Formerly known as the Bibliothèque d'études arabes, turques et islamiques, the Collège de France’s Bibliothèque d'études ottomanes (Library of Ottoman Studies), which was awarded the ‘CollEx-collections d'excellence’ distinction in 2022, subscribes to more than 40 specialized journals and houses more than 23,000 books, of which approximately 800 are in Ottoman Turkish. The library also keeps original maps produced by the geographic services of European armies, notably the War Office of the United Kingdom, the K.u.K (kaiserlich und königlich) Militärgeographisches Institut of Austria-Hungary, and the Service géographique of the French army. Some of these documents were bequeathed by professors Jacques Berque, Régis Blachère, Claude Cahen, Louis Massignon, André Miquel, Henri Laoust, Jean Sauvaget and Stéphane Yerasimos. In my presentation, I propose to explain the library’s acquisition policy, to examine the practices of retrospective and multi-script cataloguing, and to explore the collections, notably by providing a quantitative and qualitative description with a pronounced emphasis on older books. This will allow me to situate the Bibliothèque d’études ottomanes in the landscape of French and even European libraries and to underline its singularity and its contributions to research on the Ottoman Empire and the wider Muslim world.

**The Ottoman and Turkish Language Collections at the Aga Khan Library**

**Waseem Farooq |** Reference and Instructional Librarian, Aga Khan University, UK

This presentation aims to provide an overview of the Ottoman and Turkish language collections at the Aga Khan Library, highlighting aspects of history, acquisition, cataloguing and digitisation. The collections include a mix of printed books, journals, and manuscripts, dating from the late 18th to the late 20th century. I will attempt to situate the collection development strategy and to illustrate its significance in the context of the UK; and will attempt to feature works of significance and uniqueness particularly within the UK, and further afield. Finally, the presentation will seek to illustrate the value of the Ottoman and Turkish language collections at the Aga Khan Library for linguistic and literary historical research, particularly on the transition from the Arabic script to the Latin, pre and post 1929.

**Notes on the Importance and Contribution of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha Collection in Terms of the History of 17th Century Poets Nevîzâde and His Family**

**Dr. Sadık Yazar |** Professor, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye

The first version of the Köprülü Library, which is the first example of the libraries "established in a detached building without being connected to a social complex", consisted largely of the books of Fâzıl Ahmed Pasha (d. 1087/1676); In the following years, it took its final form with the books dedicated by Hâfız Ahmed Pasha and Mehmed Âsım Bey, who came from the same family. Due to its founders and the books it contains, it is a very distinguished library that deserves to be the subject of scientific studies from different perspectives. As a matter of fact, a session dedicated to this collection has been held in two separate symposiums recently, and some papers on different aspects of the library have been presented (See 3rd International Suleymaniye Symposium>The Köprülü Library and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha Collection, İstanbul 2021; OSARK (3rd International Congress on Ottoman Studies)> Fazıl Ahmed Pasha Manuscript Collection: New Findings and New Approaches, İstanbul 2022). In the paper, we will try to follow the traces of Nevîzâde Atâyî and his family, one of the leading poets, writers and biographers lived in 17th century, based on the manuscripts in the collection of approximately 2000 books by Fâzıl Ahmed Pasha, the first version of the library. Previously, I had the opportunity to examine all the manuscripts in the Köprülü Library within the framework of some questions, with two studies titled "General Evaluations of the Literary Works in the Köprülü Library" and "Notes on the Mejmuas in the Fâzıl Ahmed Paşa Collection". During these studies, I found that besides the books that Nevîzâde owned in different ways, there were books that belonged to his father and grandfather, as well as the majmua (miscellany) that he created. Thus, the hypothesis that the Köprülü Library was a collection containing important data for Nevîzâdes was formed. In the paper, I will share the data we have determined in this direction and try to emphasize the importance and contribution of this in terms of family history of the Nevizades.

**The Road Less Travelled: The Provenance Tale of the Persian and Arabic Manuscripts from Tiflis at SOAS Library**

**Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb |** Independent Researcher, Formerly SOAS Library, UK

While many provenance studies of manuscripts held in European libraries are often confined to their last European acquirer (or their handful of well-known purveyors) for lack of earlier information and material evidence, the case of the Tiflis manuscripts collection at SOAS Library provide a rare opportunity to reveal the itineraries of such manuscripts much further back, involving lesser known and studied (at least in Europe) manuscripts brokers from Imperial and early Soviet Russia.

Such as an Arianne thread, the possession and transaction (acquisition, endowment, sale, gift, etc.) stamps and notes present in that collection allowed us to trace track the historical and geographical maze through which those hundreds of Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts first got gathered in Ottoman and Armenian private and foundation libraries in the present eastern Anatolian region going from Trabzon to the Lake Van, then dispersed through war (looting and rescue missions competing) to various institutions in Georgia, Russia and finally in several American and European libraries, including the SOAS Library, where some seventy of those manuscripts found their way between 1923 and 1945.

I propose first to give an overview of the manuscripts kept at SOAS library. Then, building on the provenance research carried out by our colleagues Dr. Ilya Zaytsev and Evyn Kropf, I shall provide a mapping and timeline of those travels and transactions as they are known so far, but will particularly focus on the crucial moment when those manuscripts passed into the hands of the British Foreign Office in Tiflis (Tbilisi) in the summer of 1920, right in the middle of an intensely chaotic political and military power struggle.

Finally, I will reveal how and where those 500 manuscripts from Tiflis got dispersed after they were delivered to the British Museum in 1921, to end up in at least seven different libraries in England, Germany and America.

I hope in this presentation to shed some light on the identity of the local agents of such transactions as well as on the various and often contradictory trends and motivations that pushed those manuscripts from one custody place to another across the world. Beyond the sheer thrill of sleuthing out the origins of these collections in our institutions, this provenance story hints at the previous existence of a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual society in the Armenian Highlands, which made the building up of such collections possible, before they got violently dispersed through genocide, war and greed, then recomposed and deformed by various imperialist and orientalist selective processes. Trying to unravel those processes might lead us to better understand the social, religious and intellectual fabric of that region.

**Session 2: Historic Research in Libraries**

**On the History of Madrasa Khalfa and Its Library**

**Akram Habibulla |** Librarian for Middle Eastern, Central Eurasian and Islamic Studies, Indiana University, USA

The purpose of this paper is to present research findings on the history of madrasa Khalfa and its library. The madrasa was founded at the end of 18th century in the village of Qarnaq, located 35 miles north of the city of Yasi (Turkistan). According to early 20th – century local historians, there were around 200 students in Khalfa madrasa from different parts of Kazakhstan, such as Karaganda, Atbasar, Kzylzhar, etc. This information demonstrates that the madrasa played a role in the spread of Islam into northern parts of Kazakh lands. The founder of the madrasa Ay-Muhammad Quzi khwaja was not only mudarris (teacher). He is also known as a scholar and translator of the religious treatise "Maslak al-muttaqin" of the Naqshbandi shaykh Sufi Allahyar (1644-1724) from Persian to Chagatai. Three manuscript copies of this translation are available today: one in National Library of Uzbekistan and one in Beruni Institute in Tashkent. Third manuscript is in Bavarian State Library in Germany. There was also, according to historians, a big library belonging to the madrasa. It housed hundreds of important religious books and Islamic manuscripts but has not survived intact. Its contents are now scattered in various places. This information corroborated by recently discovered manuscript books bearing on their pages personal seal of Quzi khwaja the founder. The paper describes recently discovered three manuscripts that were from his library. They are now kept in different places: one in Tashkent, one in local museum in Qarnaq, and one in private collection.

**Arabic Linguistics in the Matenadaran Collection**

**Knarik Sahakyan |** Researcher, Arabic Mss Codicologist-Cataloguer, Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts – Matenadaran, Yerevan, Armenia

The paper is dedicated to Arabic linguistic manuscripts of the Matenadaran Collection. The cataloging process is in progress. Based on preliminary research, it can be stated that the Arabic Scripts Collection contains more than 300 codices in this field, including grammar books, textbooks, bilingual (Arabic-Turkish, Arabic-Persian), trilingual (Arabic-Turkish-Persian) and Arabic explanatory dictionaries. Along with the manuscripts referring to the well-known names such as al-Zamakhshari, Ibn Malik, Ibn Hisham, Al-Jurjani, Al-Suyuti and many others, the Matenadaran preserves two unprinted opuses: two copies of «The Book of Arabic Grammar in Armenian Language» composed by Margar Zacharia Khodjents (according to the colophon, the original work was composed in 1766) and an Arabic grammar book in Russian by Skibinevski (Foreign Languages Collection).

**The Islamic Shareholding Press’ (1905-1948) Output in the Bosnian Language Texts in Arabic Script and its Impact on the Bosnian Muslims’ Cultural Renaissance**

**Fatima Kadic |** Head Librarian, University of Sarajevo - Faculty of Islamic Studies, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The incorporation of Bosnia into the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1878 was a watershed moment for a former Ottoman province which elicited various responses from its Muslims in the field of culture and education. Various attempts to reformulate their place in a society undergoing modernization and westernization under the Habsburgs (1878-1918) and later during the Yugoslav Kingdom period (1918-1941) would eventually lead to the Bosnian Muslim literary and cultural renaissance. One of its agents was a printing house known as the Islamska dionička štamparija or the Islamic Shareholding Press (1905-1948) which published material in various scripts including Arabic. At the start of the Austro-Hungarian period a majority of Bosnian Muslims had some degree of familiarity with the Arabic script, but were unable to read in Latin and the modern Cyrillic, the official scripts during the Austro-Hungarian and Yugoslav kingdom periods. As part of his reformist drive to promote education, Džemaludin Čaušević (1870-1938), the grand mufti of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, launched a new codified form of the Arabic script. His efforts led to the publication of religious books and educational books as well as periodicals. The use of Arabic script gradually declined from the 1920 onwards until its complete disappearance a couple of decades later. The paper seeks to place the role and impact of the Press on the cultural life of Bosnian and Yugoslav Muslims.

**Session 3: On Manuscripts**

**More Manuscripts from Different Sources and New Technical Approaches: The Second Phase of the Qalamos Project (2023-26)**

**Michaela Hoffmann-Ruf |**Project Coordinator of the Qalamos Project, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

**Dr. Michael Becker |** URZ Leipzig, Germany

Since 2020, the DFG-funded project Orient-Digital has developed the portal Qalamos as a union catalogue for manuscripts from Asian and African manuscript traditions. As we approach the end of the first project phase in summer 2023, Qalamos provides access to the metadata of manuscripts from more than 25 German heritage institutions. In addition, the database contains authority records of persons linked to the manuscripts, such as authors, compilers, scribes, former owners etc. as well as authority records of works that enable the users to locate texts in all cooperating institutions.

After a short overview over the achievements of the first project phase and the objectives of the second phase, my presentation will especially focus on the future strategic development of Qalamos.

During the past three years, we have homogenized highly heterogeneous data from different manuscript collections by manually correcting and standardising the descriptions from German catalogues. In the second project phase, we will gradually include more collections from outside of Germany. As it will not be possible to follow the same procedure of manually retro-cataloguing, the question arises as to how these heterogeneous data from external partners can be efficiently integrated into the portal. What are the technical possibilities? To what extent do we have to compromise on data quality? And, can variations in data depth perhaps be compensated by a shared metasearch with other established digital catalogues?

**Wetzstein’s Arab Storytellers and Sachau’s Syrian Copyists: News from Manuscript Digitisation at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin**

**Christoph Rauch |** Head of Oriental Department, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Germany

 Today’s academic libraries face enormous challenges in keeping pace with technological changes and adapting their services and data to the ever-changing needs of researchers. In this permanent digital transformation, a rather basic issue asserts itself as a long-term task in libraries that hold special materials: the digitisation of their unique collections. The manuscript portal “Qalamos” was also developed with the aim of offering better access to digitised objects. Since the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin opened its digitisation centre in 2010, projects for the digitisation of Oriental manuscripts have been continuously initiated, so that 6,000 volumes are already available under a public domain licence. In my presentation, I will give an overview of recently completed projects (photoarchive of the Sanaa Qurans, Hebrew manuscripts), ongoing projects (Arabic folk novels, Christian Oriental manuscripts) and an outlook on future activities.

**Presentation of the Center for Manuscript Studies, FSMVÜ**

**Dr. Ertuğrul Ökten |**Assistant Professor, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Türkiye

The main area of interest of the Center for Manuscript Studies (founded in 2020, Fatih Sultan Mehmet University) is manuscript and book culture. The center has organized several academic activities such as symposia, lectures, workshops, reading groups and certificate programs since its foundation. Through its programs the center aims to reach graduate students and researchers in the fields of history, literature, theology, and art who are interested and plan to work in the field of manuscript/book culture. Manuscript/book culture studies have found a significant reception in the American and European academic circles. A growing interest for this field in Turkey, a country that hosts several rich manuscript collections, has necessitated the foundation of an academic and professional medium. Serving as this medium, the center has brought together many academicians and researchers from various universities in Turkey and abroad. It has also provided young researchers a venue to present and discuss their research in the field. Through its various programs the center becomes a more and more vibrant environment for manuscript/book studies day by day. The aim of this paper is discussing the conditions that led to the founding of the center, its current programs and its short and long term aims. Where the center stands in the field of manuscript/book culture and its contribution to the field are two important questions to be considered in the paper.

**Traces of the Turkic Culture in Canada: Eleazar Birnbaum’s Collection of Ottoman Turkish and Çağatay Manuscripts at Fisher Rare Books Library**

**Lale Javanshir |** Middle East and Ottoman and Turkish Metadata Specialist, University of Toronto, Canada

University of Toronto’s Fisher Rare book library is home to volumes of Islamic manuscripts, most of which are just recently being catalogued. One of the earliest collections of this kind is the books and manuscripts acquired from Suliman’s bookshop back in 1973. The most recent one is Professor Birnbaum’s Ottoman Turkish and Chaghatai manuscript collection. Both of these collections significantly contribute to the University of Toronto Libraries’ Islamic Studies collection, enriching one of the largest and most prominent institutions for studying Islamic culture in North America.

Brill has published a catalogue of Professor Brinbaum’s manuscript collection under the title of Ottoman Turkish and Cağatay MSS in Canada, a union catalogue of the four collections. In this paper, I will specifically focus on this catalogue, how and why the university librarians spent such an effort to keep the collection in Canada, and the significance of having this work where it is now. To be specific, this paper will evaluate the collection concerning its importance to the field of Ottoman and Turkish studies in the context of coursed offered by the History and the Middle Eastern Studies Department as well as its potential to make the University of Toronto Libraries a hub for the growing number of researchers who come from Turkey to Canada.

**Historical Sources and Historiography of the History of Bookbinding in Central Asia**

**Matluba Rakhmankulova |**Researcher, Center of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Books written in the East are valuable as important historical sources, and at the same time, even if the pages inside the book are lost, the cover of the book is important for the study of historical, technical and methodological aspects of the samples of the book of the East. Therefore, in the research of the history of Central Asian bookbinding, the bindings created in different periods of history, which have reached the present day and are kept in various book treasures, are the main source.

The second group of historical sources in the study of the history of Central Asian bookbinding are historical works and historical documents that record information about bookbinding.

"Preface to the Bahram Mirza Album" by Dost-Muhammad (d. 1560); "Qanun as-suvar" by Sadiqbek Afshar (1533-1610); "Bayan us-sanoat" Abulfazl Tiflisi (XIIth century); an unknown author’s Tajik treatise on paper dyeing methods, on pages 182-185 of the manuscript copy number 415, kept at the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni; images drawn on manuscripts of Baburids; news about the expositions of the first Turkestan Museum, opened in 1876; V. Galyanov’s statistical notes on Tashkent at the end of the 19th century; stories of the ethnographer Yu.O.Yakubovsky and others include. One of the historical sources - the report prepared for Timurid prince Boysungur Mirza is a unique historical document titled "Arzadosht". it was found among the pages (f.98a) of an album (MS Hazine 2153) stored in the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1948 by Professor Zaki Walidy Togon (1890-1670).

The research used in the study of the history of Central Asian bookbinding consists of researches created during the Soviet period and the period of independence, as well as researches created by foreign scholars.

We study the history of the development of the bookbinding in Central Asia in three stages: Herat bookbindings of the Timurid period; bookbindings of the Shaybani and Ashtarkhani periods; 19th century Central Asian cover art.

**Session 4: Challenges of Modern Librarianship**

**Internationalize the Ohio State University Library Catalog: Multi-script Subject Headings**

**Magda El-Sherbiny |** Head of Middle East & Islamic Library, The Ohio State University, USA

The Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) is the primary tool used to assign subject headings for all library materials, including those published in non-Roman scripts, such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and so forth. Although the LCSH is a comprehensive tool, it falls short in providing in-depth description of cultural phenomena for those regions of the world that publish in scripts other than the Roman. Assigning subjects headings in the script and language of the publication is the optimal solution to this problem. Adding the Arabic, Japanese or Chinese language subject terms to catalog records will enable the academics to conduct research in those languages and gain access to materials previously unavailable to them. Communication among culturally and linguistically diverse communities is hampered by unequal access to educational opportunities and information sources. In the field of library science, access to information is controlled to large degree by the way libraries classify knowledge and the terms that are used to describe subject categories. Studies of the LCSH indicate that the database does not sufficiently represent the cultures of underrepresented and marginalized communities. Several years ago, the Ohio State University Library has undertaken the task of expanding access to its non-Roman collections by introducing subject terms in the language of the script. In this presentation will describe the project, the reasons, the pilot, and the experience of subject searching of non-Roman script materials using either the LCSH English language terms, or their equivalents in non-Roman script languages. Ensuing discussion will be focused on how the MARC21 record can be utilized to display non-Roman script subject terms in the ILS. I will conclude with a demonstration of a non-Roman script search from the Ohio State University Library catalog.

**Le musée virtuel du patrimoine écrit : enjeux de valorisation des œuvres et manuscrits tunisiens à l’ère numérique**

**Dr. Tarek Ouerfelli |** Assistant Professor, A'Sharqiyah University, Oman

Cette communication s’intéresse au projet du musée virtuel du patrimoine écrit à la Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie. Ce projet est réalisé en partenariat entre la Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie et l’Académie tunisienne des Sciences, des Lettres et des arts (Beit al Hikma), les archives nationales de Tunisie et l’institut du patrimoine. Le musée virtuel du patrimoine écrit vise à faire connaître les principales œuvres littéraires, intellectuelles et scientifiques, produites sous forme de manuscrits ou d’imprimés dans le pays tout au long de son histoire, de l’ère punique jusqu’à nos jours. Dans ce cadre, le musée comporte des livres imprimés, des manuscrits, des inscriptions dont plusieurs sont conservés soit en Tunisie ou à l’étranger comme à titre d’exemple une inscription édilitaire (relative aux magistrats municipaux) en punique (VI ou II av. J-C.) trouvée à Carthage près des thermes d’Antonin et conservée au Musée du Bardo et «Le traité de la mélancolie » d’Ishaq Ibn Imran rédigé à Kairouan au 9ème siècle durant la période aghlabide et conservé dans une Bibliothèque à Munich (Allemagne). A travers ce travail, nous mettons l’accent sur le fonds actuel du musée virtuel du patrimoine écrit et ses spécificités, ainsi que sur les différentes phases de création du musée: de la recherche des documents à la collecte, à la numérisation au traitement et à la diffusion sur la plateforme numérique qui a été conçue pour ce musée virtuel et qui est accessible en ligne sans restriction. En effet, cette plateforme numérique cherche à valoriser l'évolution de la production intellectuelle en Tunisie dans tous les domaines, en prenant en considération sa flexibilité géographique et les différentes acculturations linguistiques, religieuses et culturelles. Enfin, nous concluons notre communication sur les modalités de recherche et d’accès aux documents à travers la plateforme du musée virtuel du patrimoine écrit. Mots clés : Musée virtuel du patrimoine écrit/ Œuvres intellectuelles / Manuscrits / Numérisation / Valorisation / Bibliothèque nationale / Tunisie.

**How to Access? – Implementing Different Mechanisms of Access in MENA-related ‎Repositories**

**Dr. Volker Adam |**Field Librarian, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, FID Nahost, Germany

As research projects with a focus on Middle East material seek for assistance in the ‎management of research data, the topic is becoming increasingly more relevant for us ‎librarians. We are noticing a trend that researchers need more and more digitised cultural and ‎written materials from the MENA region for their research process, who want to work with ‎them digitally and then archive them for the long term. But how should libraries deal with ‎digital data from MENA-related research projects that cannot be made accessible so easily in ‎Open Access? What strategies of access restrictions and authentification in dealing with ‎digitised cultural property from the MENA region are beginning to take hold in the library and ‎archive sector?‎

The Specialised Information Service (FID) Middle East is collaborating with several Middle ‎East related projects on the description and storage of research data. We are confronted with ‎the problem of working on achieving the highest possible level of visibility and accessibility ‎and at the same time complying with the rights and needs of data protection. Therefore, we ‎plan to set up a repository that encompasses several levels of access, from Open Access to ‎Closed Access.‎

The paper aims to present the obstacles we meet in setting up a workflow for generating the ‎meta data and in the development of the technical infrastructure for one repository that is ‎home to all relevant research data regardless of their level of access.‎

**Nomen est Omen; Authority Control, Manuscript Description and Digital Humanities**

**Yasmin Faghihi |** Head of Near and Middle Eastern Department, Cambridge University, UK

In this talk I will discuss some issues surrounding personal names, how names relate to personal identities, and the significance of this work for bibliographic description and manuscript research. With a focus on names from the Islamicate World, I will introduce methodologies and best practices established for creating authority records in memory institutions of the Global North, and an established approach from the Global South. I will discuss how technology, and in particular Digital Humanities methods have facilitated this work while raising new questions. Recognising the intellectual value of authority work and the substantial efforts to pursue it at scale has introduced approaches beyond technology and method, highlighting the impact of human collaboration.

**Session 5: International Collections**

**IRCICA Library and Archive Department: Its Collections and Projects** 

**Didar Bayır |**Head of Library and Archive Department, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), Türkiye

The Library and Archive Department (LAD), which was established in 1980 as a department of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), maintains its importance as one of the special research libraries operating on international basis. The LAD, which served in its historical buildings in the Yıldız Palace between 1980 and 2017, continues to function in the complex of Bâb-ı Âlî since 2017. The IRCICA Library and Archive Department aims to offer its rich collections in the fields of history, geography, religion, science, philosophy, literature, art and architecture under the main headings of Islamic culture and civilization to users from all over the world; to encourage research and studies in these fields; and to develop and preserve these collections for future generations. Most of the collections containing very valuable materials were donated by well-known individuals and institutions. One of the most important goals of IRCICA is to transfer these resources, which consist of written, printed and audio-visual materials, into a searchable, readable, and usable way by using information and communication technologies. With the planned digital transformation process, it will be possible to receive and offer library and archive collections and services over a global interactive network. In this paper, the collections of the Library and Archive Department and several projects that were carried out by IRCICA will be introduced.

**The National Library of Lebanon: History, Function and Perspectives**

**Hans-Peter Pökel |**Head Librarian, German Orient Institute Beirut

In my talk I will give an introduction into the history and the development of the National Library in Lebanon which was founded in the 1920s in the colonial context of the mandate period as the Grande Bibliothèque de Beyrouth and that has developed in the following decades to a symbol of national identity. I will in a second part furthermore consider functions of the National Library by also reflecting on different definitions of a national library that is particularly dedicated to the collection and preservation of the national heritage of a country. The last part will consider the current state of the National Library in Beirut within the context of present challenges and will also ask for future perspectives.

**Nigizberk and Powell: Documenting the Middle East, Two Collections at Koç University Suna Kıraç Library**

**Mustafa Ergül |**Archive Specialist, Koç University Suna Kıraç Library, Türkiye

Digitization and digital methods had a big impact on the accessibility and the visibility of the archives all around the world. In general the practice of digitizing cultural heritage including archives, collections or sites, also strengthened the interdisciplinary approach and gathered field professions together. This new service, highly embraced by the institutions, contributed to the new possibilities in constructing multidimensional interpretations especially in social sciences. It also revealed the different perspectives of individuals in the process of developing their own collections. These aspects can be observed in the digitization projects including archival materials related to the Middle East, parallel to the multilayered and complex formation of the region’s socio-cultural history. This presentation intends to introduce and focus on the variety of the archival materials reflecting the historical and visual heritage of the Middle East through two separate collections at Koç University Suna Kıraç Library Archive as “Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection of Architectural Photographs and Drawings” and “Josephine Powell Photographic and Sound Archive”. Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk (1880-1945), is an Ottoman architect who involved many construction and restoration projects especially in the late Ottoman Period and also documented monuments in the vast geography of the Ottoman State at his time. Josephine Powell (1919-2007), is a well-known American photographer and traveler who documented art, architecture and culture of the geographies she traveled in her lifetime including Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. The archival documents of her collection consist mainly of ethnographic images, religious ceremonies, festivals, rural areas, historical monuments and sites, portraits, daily life scenes, artifacts from museums. The presentation will highlight the unique approaches of these two individuals from different backgrounds on documenting the Middle East at their time in its relation with the art, architecture and daily life of the region.

**Kurdish Collecting at Penn**

**Heather Hughes |** Middle Eastern Studies Librarian, Penn Libraries, USA

While a few libraries in North America have sought and acquired Kurdish materials, Kurdish collecting is inconsistent across the academic and research library landscape. This is largely due to the marginalized status of the Kurdish language and publishing in the Middle East, and by extension the peripheral position Kurdish and Kurdish Studies holds in Middle East Studies. As part of combating this trend, the Penn Libraries’ Kurdish collecting efforts build upon previous work from Middle East bibliographers as the libraries seeks to ensure greater representation for the peoples and languages of Kurdistan.

One aspect of Kurdish collecting is defining it, as materials about or by Kurds are written in various languages and geographies, including in diaspora. My approach has been to take a broad and inclusive approach to collecting Kurdish materials. I will discuss this as well as strategies and research undertaken to grow our Kurdish collection, institutional support, and directions I hope to take the collection in the future.

**The Gift of Diversity: Recent Middle Eastern Collection Donations to the University of Toronto Libraries**

**Blair Kuntz |** Middle East Studies Librarian, University of Toronto, Canada

The city of Toronto, Canada has been recognized by the United Nations and the BBC as the most culturally diverse city in the world. Over half the city’s residents were born outside Canada and it is home to 230 different nationalities from across the world. For the University of Toronto, which holds the largest library collection of Middle Eastern materials in Canada, this diversity has proved a blessing as the university library has been the recipient of several unique gift collections both from diaspora faculty members and members from the local Middle Eastern community. In the autumn of 2022, for example, the library acquired the library collection of medical doctor lhan Gokce whose first love was Azerbaijani and Turkish music. An instrumentalist in a local Turkish music ensemble, Dr. Gokce amassed a remarkable collection of books on Turkish and Azerbaijani music. The second collection discussed is the curated collection of newspaper and journal clippings on the Cultural Revolution in Higher Education in Iran which has now been digitized. The collection amassed is the work of exiled Iranian University of Toronto professor Dr. Sharzad Mojab who also donated a unique collection of books on gender studies in the Middle East. The final collection discussed is the donation of University of Toronto Iranian Kurdish professor Amir Hassanpour who passed away in 2017. Dr. Hassanpour was an avid collector of books in many languages on politically progressive themes. He also amassed a large collection of Kurmanji and Sorani Kurdish-language materials that are not available in other North American or European libraries. Indeed, Dr. Hassanpour’s gift doubles the number of Kurdish-language materials in the library.

**Session 6: PAC Centre of Conservation and Preservation for Arab Countries**

**In the Wake of the Disaster Project of Iraqi Scientific Assets Preservation (Case Study)**

**Amar Aljawad |** Director of Digital Information Center, Library of Al-Abbas Holy Shrine, Iraq

In this paper we will represented our experience after the human catastrophe was created by ISIS, an armed terrorist organization that merged from al-Qaeda terrorist organization, seized vast areas of northern and western Iraq. United Nations designates ISIS responsible for human rights violations and war crimes. Amnesty International Organization indicts it of ethnic cleansing (on a historical level) in addition to the destruction of many Iraqi scientific sources such as manuscripts, rare books, etc. According to UNESCO, which described the exposure of the libraries of Mosul city by ISIS as "one of the most serious acts of destruction in the history of mankind". Therefore, the lessons learned from past disasters as well as the need to further strengthen disaster preparedness for response, take action in anticipation of events, integrate disaster risk reduction in response preparedness and ensure that capacities are in place for effective response and recovery at all levels. Disasters have demonstrated that the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, which needs to be prepared ahead of a disaster, is a critical opportunity to "Build Back Better". In this paper, we will review how the library of al-Abbas Holy Shrine, a public library in Iraq, has contributed to the preservation of the Iraqi scientific assets deposited in other libraries, many of which have been damaged by the ISIS. We will look at the beginnings of the project and the difficulties encountered and the steps of the work and how to digitize the scientific assets according to the world standard specifications and store them on the long-life storage media. We will show clearly the usefulness of this project as well, and inform the libraries of the world in relation to this experience through IFLA platform to avoid the destruction of the countries’ works and their scientific assets by natural or human disasters.

**La gestion des manuscrits à la bibliothèque nationale d’Algérie**

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Les dernières années ont été témoins sans précédent d’un intérêt pour le patrimoine manuscrit au niveau national et, international, en tant que partie intégrante de l’économie culturelle d’une part et aussi un domaine scientifique qui nécessite encore des recherches et des explorations par les chercheurs et les étudiants de cette discipline, car les résultats scientifiques ont prouvé que l’avenir et le développement scientifique sont suffisants pour prouver ou infirmer de nombreuses hypothèses liées à ce domaine, car ils contiennent de nombreux secrets et mystères qui attendent d’être révélés par les chercheurs et les codicologues, vu son importance,

Le législateur algérien a promulgué un ensemble de lois et de décrets qui contribueraient au processus de collecte, et d'assurer sa préservation, son entretien et sa définition, et la tentative de prolonger sa vie et le livrer aux générations futures, et dans ce contexte, la loi n° 149-93, datée du 22 juin 1993, qui détermine les tâches liées à la collection et à la préservation du patrimoine national du manuscrit, ainsi que la loi n° 04- concernant la protection du patrimoine culturel national, nous mettrons en lumière les efforts déployés par la Bibliothèque nationale d’Algérie pour la collecte de ce patrimoine a travers les achats, legs et échanges, et les procédures pratiques, pour le maintenir et le préserver, selon les normes internationales , ainsi que le catalogage et la diffusion. Nous expliquerons également les procédures suivies pour la valorisation du patrimoine, tel que les activités qu’organise la bibliothèque de façon permanente, tout en se basant sur la sensibilisation de la communauté de l’importance que porte ces manuscrits pour notre histoire, ainsi que notre futur, et aussi comment préserver les collections de manuscrits conservés chez les familles et dans les zaouïas et les préserver conformément aux normes, en particulier après les récents événements qui ont conduit à la Perte de 3794 manuscrits au cours des deux dernières années (2021-2023).

**Documentation and Conservation at Malek Library in Iran**

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Malek National Library, with owns about 20 thousand exquisite manuscripts, is one of the six big collections of manuscripts in Iran. Haj Hussein Malek was the founder of this library and museum. He is one of the biggest Iranian endowers and has endowed many items in many fields to the people of Iran. With the establishment of the Department of Documentation and Conservation in the last ten years, comprehensive plans for the protection, restoration, and documentation of these manuscripts have been formulated and many activities have been carried out so that this library can be a model for other Iranian libraries in these fields. The restrictions and hardships of recent years in Iran made this department research and experiment with simpler and local methods without reducing the quality of work. This presentation introduces the activities of this department during the past years in the mentioned fields.