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Paper abstracts



MELCom Middle East Librarians Committee

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MariaLuisa Langella, Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme (MMSH), France.

The library and archive collections at the Médiathèque of the MMSH, Aix-en-Provence.

My presentation will include a succinct overview of the Médiathèque (Library and Archives) of MMSH (Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'Homme) in Aix-en-Provence (France), its history and role within the Aix-Marseille University and CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique), and more broadly its position within research on the Mediterranean region in France and beyond.

I will then focus on the Médiathèque's library and archive collections that are directly relevant to my role, and to the scope of the conference. Out of a total of some 140 000 printed works held in the Médiathèque, 40 000 are in Arabic language, 1000+ titles being periodicals. In terms of archives, the Médiathèque has acted over the years as the main repository of the research produced by scholars affiliated with the University and CNRS, but it has also attracted donations from Government representatives and other personalities who have travelled to North Africa, South-West and Central Asia during the 20th century. Material comes in various formats, including paper, sound and image, on a variety of supports. A number of manuscripts are also present in some collections.

More specifically, I will showcase one example from the archive collections of French historian André Raymond (1925-2011), whose research and teaching career as a specialist of the history of the city in the Arab world spanned several decades and stretched from North Africa to Lebanon. His archives, including papers and scholarly records, as well as photographic material, were donated to the Médiathèque by his spouse in 2015, along with some library resources. I will survey the archive content and its cataloguing, which is in progress. The papers, scholarly records and maps are catalogued on Calames, the online platform of the French Ministry of research and higher education indexing archives and manuscripts held by French university and research libraries and

institutions. As to the photographs, they are made available on MediHAL, an open-access archive platform for the sharing and dissemination of published and unpublished research, according to the FAIR principles. I will show some of the work I have carried out over the past few months specifically on the photographic archive, highlighting some interesting aspects as well as issues arising when treating such type of resources, not least juridical and ethical questions linked to their dissemination.

Mariéva Chalvin and **Anas Alaili**, Campus Condorcet, France.
Humathèque Condorcet: a new academic library and its oriental collections.

The Humathèque, located on the new Campus Condorcet in Aubervilliers (in the suburbs of Paris), is both a library and an archive centre. It brings together the humanities and social sciences holdings and research archives of more than 50 libraries and archive centres, and also offers a range of research support services and cultural events. The Humathèque's collections are quite extensive and include 1 million printed documents.

This scientific material includes both archives resulting from the work of the centres and the researchers who run them, and archives collected from other sources (learned societies, activists, government officials, accounts of contemporary history) by these same centres and researchers.

We will briefly introduce you to this library, its history and its archives related to Middle East studies ; then, Anas Alaili will focus on the presentation of the library's Arabic collections, and at least Mariéva Chalvin will introduce you to Kurdish and Turkish collections.

Benjamin Guichard, Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations (BULAC), France.
La valorisation des ressources pour les études maghrébines en France.

La communication présentera les initiatives conjointes de la BULAC et d'autres établissements documents en lien avec des réseaux de chercheurs pour développer les études sur le Maghreb. Ce travail s'inscrit dans un projet piloté par le groupement d'intérêt scientifique «Moyen-Orient et mondes musulmans» de développement des études sur le Maghreb, en favorisant le décloisonnement disciplinaire et linguistique et l'accessibilité aux sources arabes et berbères conservées en France.

Ce travail a permis plusieurs initiatives dans le domaine de la valorisation des ressources manuscrites: inventaire des manuscrits arabes maghrébins éparpillés dans les collections publiques mené par l'IRHT, reconstitution et projet de numérisation enrichie de bibliothèques de figures de la résistance algérienne à la colonisation (Abd el-Kader, cheikh Haddad), entraînement et exploitation de modèles de reconnaissance automatique de l'écriture arabe. manuscrite. En parallèle : valorisation des publications en études maghrébines en accès ouvert (portail HAL), élaboration d'un annuaire de chercheurs et d'un répertoire des sources. Ces résultats sont valorisés ou en voie de l'être sur une plateforme numérique ouverte, www.etudes-magrebines.fr

Alya El Hosseiny, CEDEJ - Center for Economic, Legal, and Social Studies and Documentation, Egypt.
Developing a collection policy for a multilingual multidisciplinary research library.

Issues of collection balance, future-proofing, and accessibility of knowledge are among chief considerations for a librarian wishing to maintain and expand a library collection for a research centre. In the case of a multilingual library catering to researchers in disparate disciplines, these questions are complicated by considerations of working languages and levels of specialisation. This

presentation will address the main challenges and roadblocks encountered in the process of formulating a collection development policy for a medium-sized research library, as well as the strategies employed to surmount them.

The Center for Economic, Legal, and Social Studies and Documentation (CEDEJ) is a research centre based in Cairo, Egypt; it is funded and overseen by the French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs as well as the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). Its library serves a network of researchers belonging to a variety of Egyptian, European, and American institutions, and ranging from advanced masters students to established scholars. Their research is mostly focused on Egypt, Sudan, and/or the MENA region, in the modern and contemporary periods, and covers all fields of the social sciences and humanities.

The current collection contains 36000 titles, which cover areas such as the legal history of Egypt, its modern political history, and religious thought, including intra-religion dialogue; it also includes healthy subcollections on urbanism, geography and ecology, European-Arab relations, and medieval islamic history. As the acquisitions program is being developed, and a collection development policy put in place, we have come to address a complex set of issues, such as language priorities, format variety, disciplinary distribution, and the research value of non-academic works, in order to best serve our in-house researchers and fellows, as well as independent researchers working in French, English, and Arabic. My presentation will detail such challenges and formulate strategies to serve as transferable knowledge for similar institutions.

Muhammad Safdar and **Nadeem Siddique**, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Pakistan.

The journey of acquiring a huge multilingual Islamic collection through donation for a leading Pakistani library: challenges and impact.

Gad and Birgit Rausing Library, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), is a leading library in Pakistan. It won a donation (the biggest in Pakistan's history) of a multilingual (Arabic, Persian, Sindhi, Urdu, English) Islamic collection. Currently, the researchers work in the same library and aim to explore the process of securing the collection, the challenges in winning the donation and its impact on the library.

The authors employed a qualitative research approach using a semi-structured interview guide to collect the data through interviews with the professionals who were part of the donation-hunting project. The researchers also performed observation and document analysis to get deeper insight into the process and collection. The study used NVivo software to analyse the collected data.

The findings confirmed that the donor visited the library before signing the donation deed containing multifaceted conditions such as two annual scholarships for students, automation, preservation & conservation of the collection, a security system and a dedicated floor. The interviewees highlighted challenges, such as the collection's safe transportation from one city to another, the non-availability of Persian, Arabic, and Sindhi linguistic experts in the library, and limited space and technological tools for processing the collection. It was found that the library acquired multilingual Virtua software, computers, scanners, an RFID-based security system, a fumigation chamber, and a dedicated floor, hired staff and conducted staff training to ensure safe transportation and processing of the collection. The collection played a vital role in enriching the library's resources, winning future donors' trust, and satisfying the library users' needs.

The study is unique in its investigation into the process, challenges and

impact of acquiring the collection through donation.The paper contributes to the literature and might help libraries and institutional heads know about securing rich donations and understanding the potential challenges and their impact on libraries.

Neda Zeraatkar and **Katalin Rac**, Emory University, USA.

Developing a diverse Middle Eastern collection: a case study at Emory University. (online)

Emory University Libraries' Middle Eastern collection aims to reflect the cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity of the region. Historically, collection development has been influenced by the view of the Middle East as a predominantly Muslim and Arabic-speaking region, often neglecting the contributions of non-Muslim and non-Arab communities to the region's history. This paper presents the findings of our analysis of the current Middle Eastern collection. The findings will help us see what room we have for the development of the collection that reflects the multifaceted nature of the region.

To assess how the collection maps the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity of the Middle Eastern region, we run our analytics along several parameters: genre/form, country, language, topic, and age, using the analytics function of Alma, the library's management system. This allows for a comprehensive view of holdings across physical, electronic, and archival materials within Emory's various library units. Part of our analysis is the recognition of the ethnical and religious minority groups across the Middle East, such as Kurds, Druze, Jews, Christians, and others.

While our goal is to curate a comprehensive and inclusive collection, we acknowledge several limitations barring us from reaching this goal. Institutional and academic priorities shaped by faculty interests, budgetary constraints, and relationships with vendors can potentially limit access to resources available in the Middle East, and thus our efforts to emphasize

the diversity of the collection and the diversity of the Middle East it projects.

To overcome these limitations, we propose new ways to better represent minority ethnic and religious groups while also supporting learning and research from an interdisciplinary perspective. Ultimately, this case study highlights the complexities and the potential of curating a truly diverse and inclusive Middle Eastern collection within an academic library setting.

Jamila J. Ghaddar, University of Amsterdam, and **Blair Kuntz**, retired librarian.

Fighting erasure: developing a digital infrastructure for library & archival preservation. (online)

The Fighting Erasure: Digitizing Gaza's Genocide & the War on Lebanon project was launched on October 8, 2023. Co-led by Dr. Jamila J. Ghaddar (University of Amsterdam), Dr. Hanine Shehadeh (NYU Dubai) and Dr. Rami Zurayk (American University of Beirut), the Fighting Erasure Project is a multi-faceted initiative to document and safeguard libraries, heritage and archives in Palestine and Lebanon amidst escalating conflict, with a focus on Gaza and South Lebanon (Jabal Amil) . At its core is a vision of developing a robust and decentralized digital infrastructure to support library and archival preservation, and ensure long-term access to records of historical, cultural, and political significance. By developing a governance framework and technical capacity—including secure servers, policies, guidelines, and standards—the project seeks to support information and heritage repositories across Palestine, in Palestinian refugee camps in the surrounding countries, in Lebanon, and across the Arab region. Collaboration with regional and global partners ensures a coordinated approach to preserving at-risk materials. Key activities include building a consortium of library, archival, and heritage professionals to facilitate resource sharing, advocacy, and capacity-building for institutions and custodians. This initiative emphasizes safeguarding libraries, archives, and

heritage in situ, reinforcing their connection to their original contexts and custodians, while enabling redundant storage across multiple secure sites to ensure preservation under volatile circumstances. The presentation will outline this vision and some key aspects of working towards its realization, and touch on some of the challenges and dilemmas we face. Overall, it illustrates how decentralized, public-facing, and locally grounded digital infrastructures are vital for preserving the identities, histories, knowledge, and cultural heritage of communities facing displacement and erasure.

Heather Hughes, University of Pennsylvania, USA.
Muslims in Japan: a collaborative collection.

I will discuss a collaborative project between myself and the Japanese Studies Librarian to collect and document Muslims in Japan. During the interwar period, a Tatar community flourished in Japan, and formed an Islamic Association and Press. As a number of these works have appeared on the rare book market, we started acquiring publications documenting this community as well as other primary and secondary sources from the MENA region and Japan. This includes works published by the Greater Japan Islam League. Developing this collection has allowed us to explore themes of migration, transnational connections, nationalism, and religion. We're excited to develop this collection further.

Aly Rattansi, Muslims in Canada Archives, University of Toronto.
Archiving everyday Islam in Canada.

The Muslims in Canada Archives (MiCA) was recently established at the University of Toronto to fill a gap among Canada's memory institutions. Even though there is centuries-old evidence of Muslims on Turtle Island and Muslims are recorded in Canadian census tracts that date back to the 1800s, this history is not well known. In this presentation I discuss the work

underway at the Archives, introduce two of our collections and one exemplary Muslim serial produced in Canada, to surface a selection of our materials and offer notes on their importance in understanding Muslim life and the study of Islam in Canada.

Astrid Menz, Orient Institut Istanbul, Türkiye, and **Fayek Abbas**, Hamburg University, Germany.

Fritz Krenkow's scientific legacy in Hamburg.

Fritz Krenkow was a German-English expert on Arabic language and literature, who left his entire scientiÞc library to the Seminar für Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients der Universität Hamburg. About 2750 items (books and offprints) arrived in Hamburg in the year 1949. The library of the seminar today belongs to the library of the Asien Afrika-Institut, one of the libraries of the library system of the Bibliothekssystem Universität Hamburg. It thus cooperates closely with the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky (SUB). During the time of Professor Bertold Spuler, who was a professor at Hamburg University from 1948 to 1980 the seminar handed a great number of Krenkows books and his handwritten legacy over to the main library. Today the books from the Krenkow donation are at three different locations: AAI, SUB and a storage building (not on campus). With the help of the old inventory lists, we were able to retrieve a great number of the donated books. We added a Provenance note to the catalogue entries. After we had noticed that one could still Þnd traces of Krenkows scientiÞc work in the books, like notes in the margins or on paper clips, offprints added to a book etc. we systematically combed through all the remaining books, and if necessary, a footnote concerning notes in the margins or additional material. Then we took all the notes out, scanned them and gathered them in a small online archive. We also started to work at cataloguing Krenkow's handwritten estate that is held at SUB. In our paper we will give an overview of the collection and the online archive, the cataloging process and workßow of the catalogue enrichment, the handwritten estate and what could or should be done in the future.

Roberta Dougherty, Yale University Library, USA.
« Everyone does what suits them / Jeder tut was ihm passt »: Carlo Landberg and the business of arabic manuscripts.

At his death in 1924, Count Carlo Landberg, Swedish Arabist and manuscript dealer, left behind a checkered legacy of meticulous scholarship along with a reputation for inflexible arrogance resulting in many burned bridges. His significant linguistic contributions to the study of Arabic dialects, particularly those of South Arabia, were overshadowed by the ease with which he made enemies almost everywhere throughout his life. As a scholar and dealer, he played a significant role in building major Arabic manuscript collections in Leiden, Berlin, and New Haven. In this presentation I will focus on the Landberg collection of Arabic manuscripts at Yale, consisting of more than 800 volumes, many of them the earliest known copies of classic works. I draw upon a wide range of documentation to shed some light on how Landberg built this precious personal collection from the manuscript markets of Europe, Egypt, and Yemen in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and how and why it ended up at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut in 1901. Particularly in Yemen, Landberg's collecting of manuscripts and epigraphic inscriptions of South Arabia damaged and even destroyed national heritage, and amounted to antiquities theft. To tell Landberg's complex and controversial story I draw upon European scholarly publications, contemporary Swedish fiction, popular periodicals, and a collection of letters in Arabic exchanged between Landberg and his Yemeni agents in Yemen, currently held at the Uppsala University in Sweden.

Stephane Ipert, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar.
Ownership and legal challenges for libraries in the Arab world - Historical perspective and impact on operations.

This presentation aims to examine the diverse ownership statuses of libraries and collections in the Arab region, shaped by historical circumstances, and to explore how these statuses have influenced collection management and

operations today.

Historically, many libraries in the MENA region were established as waqf (charitable endowments), deeply rooted in Islamic law. Trustees or custodians were responsible for their maintenance and governance; however, today they face numerous constraints. Following the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the nationalization processes of the 20th century in Arab countries, many of these libraries were brought under state control and this shift led to disputes over ownership and often disrupted the continuity of their heritage preservation roles.

Another specificity of the Arab region is that a significant portion of documentary heritage is in private hands, often held by families.

With these various ownership statuses, the management and operation of libraries in the region present numerous challenges for librarians, particularly in terms of access to collections, property transfers, and, most critically, issues related to intellectual property rights.

Moreover, the advent of digitization introduces additional challenges, particularly concerning intellectual property rights and the rights to the image of cultural goods, all of which are complicated by the ownership status of collections.

Vanessa Desclaux, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
Les prémices de la collection de manuscrits syriaques de la Bibliothèque nationale.

En retraçant l'histoire de la collection de manuscrits syriaques nous espérons mieux évaluer l'histoire des collections orientales conservées à la Bibliothèque de France et leur rôle dans le développement d'une école française d'études orientales. Ce premier volet s'attache à explorer les manuscrits présents à Paris au XVII^{e} siècle.

Meliné Pehlivanian, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Germany.
The collection of Armeno-Turkish manuscripts and prints at the Berlin State Library.

Armeno-Turkish literature (or: Dačkerēn/ Տաճկերէն) is a phenomenon of the Ottoman Empire as a multicultural state. From the 14th century until the 1950s, Armeno-Turkish literature existed (that is, Turkish written or printed in Armenian script). Armeno-turkish texts were created for and by Turkophone Armenians who were literate in the Armenian script. This hybrid Ottoman heritage is a very rich one: several hundred manuscripts and more than 2000 printed books as well as 120 Armenian-Turkish periodicals have to be taken into account. For a long time Dačkerēn/Armeno-turkish was rather overlooked in both Armenian and Turkish studies. In the last decade, scientific attention has considerably increased, which has led to various projects. As for example the «Armeno-Turkish Literary Archives & Studies (ATLAS)» led ty the turcological chair in Vienna (Prof. Köse) who workes with Turkish and Armenian scholars and cooperates with the Mekhitarists and their important library.

I would like to present the Berlin collection of Armeno-Turkish literature for the first time at the MELCOM conference. We are pleased to have nine Dačkerēn manuscripts (including a rare medical treatise) and 19 prints in our collection. The oldest is a book of proverbs printed in Constantinople in 1806, the most recent is from Pasadena and was printed in 1957. Of particular interest is a copy of the «Akapi Hikayesi» by Vartan Pasha (Constantinople, 1851) – the first Turkish novel ever printed.

Karam El Hoyek, Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, Liban.

Les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Orientale : un patrimoine culturel préservé à travers les siècles.

La collection des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Orientale de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth constituée de 3700 manuscrits, est un fond exceptionnel qui couvre une large gamme de connaissances, allant des écritures Saintes à des disciplines scientifiques et philosophiques variées. Elle inclut des manuscrits traitant de la Bible, du Coran, de la théologie, de l'histoire, de l'astronomie, du soufisme, de la chimie, ainsi que de la médecine et d'autres domaines. La majorité des manuscrits sont en arabe, mais on y trouve également des textes manuscrits en syriaque, garshüni, latin, grec, turc, persan, arménien, copte et d'autres, ce qui témoigne de la diversité linguistique et culturelle du Moyen-Orient au fil des siècles. Ce fond est particulièrement précieux, non seulement pour sa richesse thématique, mais aussi pour son ancienneté ; le plus ancien manuscrit de la collection date du IXe siècle. Cette collection se distingue également par l'importance de ses manuscrits arabes chrétiens, qui constituent l'une des plus grandes collections réunies en un seul endroit. La majorité des manuscrits ont été catalogués par les Pères Louis Cheikho, Ignace Abdo Khalifé et Francis Baisari, bien que près de 1500 titres restent encore à cataloguer. Afin de préserver cette richesse culturelle, des mesures de conservation rigoureuses ont été mises en place, incluant le dépoussiérage et le rangement des manuscrits dans des boîtes de conservation adaptées. Par ailleurs, la numérisation des manuscrits constitue un projet majeur visant à ralentir leur dégradation et à limiter leur manipulation. En conclusion, la préservation de cette collection exceptionnelle de manuscrits est essentielle pour maintenir vivant un patrimoine culturel précieux. Grâce aux efforts de conservation et de numérisation, ces manuscrits seront protégés et resteront accessibles aux chercheurs et aux générations futures.

Shaikha Alkharsan, Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait, Kuwait.
Plants and dyes: from traditional extraction to modern innovations.

Colors may be the best achievement of humanity after writing. It was a significant tool for transferring ideas, feelings, and religious rituals among the centuries. We can describe it as a reflection of human civilization for centuries. Ancient humans were interested or obsessed with obtaining color shades from different components by mixing natural components to get specific color shades. In the Islamic world, interest in colors began after copying the Qur'an, which required distinguishing some words, expressions, and vowel signs with specific colors. Islamic manuscripts became a rich source of ancient recipes for dyes and inks used in different parts of the Islamic world during the last centuries. All recipes included all details of the sources of materials, precise measurements, and color shades obtained by mixing materials. All historical recipes for colors and inks are chemical substances that react under environmental conditions to produce new substances that may affect text appearance and cause changes in the shape or color tone, which will lead to the loss of the text or written materials, which means the loss of our historical treasures and this is the main issue of the presentation.

Nil Baydar, Manuscript Institution of Türkiye, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Türkiye.
Paper dyeing and ink corrosion in Mamluk manuscripts.

A group of Islamic manuscripts is completely illegible due to ink corrosion. The conservation treatment of these works is considered a priority and urgent matter. These fragile, fragmentary and completely blackened manuscripts, whose texts had become unreadable, were brought to the Conservation and Archive Department of the Manuscript Instiitution of Türkiye for conservation. The common point of the works in which deterioration is observed is that the papers are dyed and the ink contains iron. In the notes they took while examining the books, old librarians also referred to manuscripts with this

type of deterioration as “burnt”, “burnt”, “ink burnt”.It is seen that the ink on dark brown papers, referred to as “Nohudî”, is corroded, while no corrosion occurs on cream-colored papers.

It was determined that the majority of the corroded works examined were dated to the 15th century, and those with a certain place of inscription were written in the cities of the Mamluk State at that time, such as Damascus, Tripoli, Nablus, Mecca, Medina and Cairo. Due to the relations between the Ottoman and Mamluk States, especially in this century, many manuscripts were exchanged. These manuscripts, which have survived from the Ottoman Empire to the present day, are mostly found in the Süleymaniye, Millet and Beyazıt Manuscript Libraries in Istanbul. In order to find other manuscripts with this type of deterioration, a survey was conducted during the censuses conducted in the libraries.

This study covers the preliminary preparation of a project that is still in the application stage and the results of the survey. According to the paper properties, ink and paper analysis of some of the manuscripts identified and conserved during the survey, the papers were dyed while they were still in the pulp state. The use of tannin-containing plants in the dyeing was determined by high performance liquid chromatography with a diode array detector (HPLC-DAD), while the iron content of the ink was determined by micro-XRF. In this study, the data obtained will be shared and the results will be evaluated.

Maxim Nasra, Qatar National Library.

Unveiling the challenges of iron-gall ink and verdigris in Islamic manuscripts: a new research initiative.

Qatar National Library’s research initiative is in the early stages of investigating the degradation mechanisms of iron gall inks and verdigris in Islamic manuscripts. These materials, historically used in Islamic calligraphy and illumination for their vivid colors and durability, pose significant preservation challenges. Over time, iron gall inks and verdigris undergo chemical and

physical changes, and variations in ink recipes, production techniques, and paper types all influence their stability.

The degradation of these inks and pigments is a major concern, with approximately 3 to 4 million Islamic manuscripts affected, representing about a quarter of all surviving documents. Despite their widespread use, research on metallic inks in Arabic manuscripts, especially verdigris, is scarce, with fewer than 20 scientific studies on the subject. This gap in knowledge underscores the need for tailored preservation methodologies to address the unique challenges posed by these materials in Islamic manuscripts, which differ from Western manuscript preservation due to the distinct ink recipes and the extensive use of verdigris in illumination.

The purpose of this presentation is to outline the objectives of the ongoing research project, which aims to assess how environmental factors such as light, humidity, and temperature affect the degradation process. Existing methods for stabilizing iron gall inks and copper-based pigments are not fully effective, and improved techniques are essential for long-term preservation. Although this initiative is still in its early stages, it seeks to develop a protective methodology focused on the specific needs of Islamic manuscripts, contributing to the preservation of these invaluable cultural artifacts.

Farah Zahra, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM), New York, USA and **Olga Andriyanova**, Institut du monde arabe – Bibliothèque, Paris, France.

IMA's library collections on Arab music: The IMA – RILM collaboration. (hybrid)

In 2022, the Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) and the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (IMA) entered a three-year collaboration aimed at engaging diverse scholarly communities and the public through sharing and showcasing the library of the Institut du Monde Arabe's extensive holdings on music from the Arab world. RILM, a UNESCO-accredited non-governmental organization dedicated to documenting and disseminating

global music research, supports this initiative by drawing on its comprehensive digital resources and products, specifically the bibliographic database RILM Abstracts of Music Literature. Through curated annotated bibliographies and blog posts drawing from this database, RILM provides accessible coverage on various Arab music topics. The Institut du Monde Arabe's library utilizes the annotated bibliographies to create book displays aligned with ongoing public exhibitions and ensures the detailed description of these resources in the SUDOC catalog, thus broadening the visibility of writings and research on music in the Arab world. The core of this presentation will focus on the IMA library's cataloging classification codes for Arab music subjects to outline its complexities as well as on RILM's evolving work on Arab music subject headings and authority terms. As a resource-sharing model between a specialized library and a global bibliography, this collaboration problematizes cataloguing and classifying writings on Arab music, taking into consideration the evolving nature of research collections and accessibility in our interconnected world. We advocate for a global approach to information literacy, expanding access to bibliographic resources for increasingly diverse audiences and drawing interest in the written heritage and new research on Arab music.

Mustafa Hasanali Akay, Université d'Istanbul Medeniyet, Türkiye.
Restructuring LC system in Turkish law - rewriting KKX codes.

In the İstanbul Medeniyet University Library, the biggest university library in Turkey in terms of capacity, we started a project to develop subject headings for Turkish law. LC classification system is used within the library and the subject headings in this system were not sufficient to establish a well-designed law collection on Turkish law. Also the structure of main subjects is not suitable for the needs of developing Turkish law under the effects of Anglo-American law system.

After analyzing the actual subject headings on LC system, all the branches of

law structured in a new way. The «classical» parts of the system is the same of the actual LC system, starting of the principal sources and private law, continuing with the public law.

The last and original part of the schema begins after public law. Till last years, continental lawyers doesn't recognize new laws as separate law branches of law such as medical law, informatics law or even intellectual property. From the traditional perspective those are some parts of the classical law subjects. So newly created schema is based on the publishing trends in Turkey. In this last part of the dossier, developing domains of the Turkish law took part such as medical law, consumer law, informatics and internet, intellectual property, economic law etc. It's also better to see those new domains as separate law branches on academic perspective, because these new domains don't belong neither private nor public law, rather they contain elements both of them and they have really original systematic.

Every domain of the Turkish law is also systematically started with the numbers finishing with ..00. 00 refers to digests and 02 for the legislation, 05 for the cases and 06 for the congresses. So 1700 is the code for digests and 1706 for the congresses of the law of obligations.

The new «system» is being used by librarians of İstanbul Medeniyet University. It's still being developed by a committee and me, as the editor of the dossier which consists of more than 2000 subject headings in Turkish and in English for the moment.

Rustin Zarkar, Cairo Overseas Office, Library of Congress, Egypt.
The Library of Congress Overseas Office: 2024-25 Acquisitions in the MENA Region.

I will highlight the acquisition activities of the Library of Congress Cairo Overseas Office over the course of 2024-25. As one of six overseas offices operated by the Library of Congress, the Cairo Office is responsible for acquiring, cataloging, and processing Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish, and Turkish language library materials in several different formats from 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Throughout the presentation, I will highlight the major challenges in acquisitions in the MENA region over the past year (most notably Yemeni, Libyan, Syrian, and Gazan materials) as well as major successes (Uyghur and Kurdish materials). In addition to discussing economic and political conditions and their effect on availability, I will provide quantitative data on prices per country and the continued transition to electronic formats.

Mark Muehlhaeusler, American University of Cairo, Egypt.
IT internships in libraries: doing more with data and digital collections. (online)

This paper reports on three rounds of summer internships at AUC Libraries for students of computer science and engineering. It highlights a selection of student projects which have a) transformed the management of bibliographic data in the Library, and b) helped create more granular access to digital collections. These internships are of mutual benefit, since they provide a learning experience for students, while also enabling the Library to undertake highly technical projects. In particular, the projects served to introduce students to problems related to Arabic OCR and metadata processing for Arabic books. The projects that relied on AI for image processing also served to uncover inherent biases in current models, proving the need for more region-specific, and culturally adapted models.

Volker Adam, University and State Library Saxony-Anhalt, Germany.
Digitization - OCR/HTR – what comes next? The conversion of non-Latin scripts into reliable data sets.

The OCRization of files of non-Latin scripts is used to convert either printed or handwritten texts from documents into machine-readable texts. The physical holdings of our libraries are digitized and the full texts recognized via OCR or HTR processes are stored in databases and used for further processing, the creation of accessible texts, the indexing and retrieval via search engines or for data extraction in research and analysis and other educational purposes.

In addition to libraries working with Open Source tools, there are commercial providers that offer tools with a high recognition rate and regular updates, which facilitates a benefit for long-term use and maintenance. But apart from costly licensing for large amounts of data, there are concerns about data sovereignty and relinquishing control of data and other changes to the company. The next step after the OCR run is the integration of these digital full texts into academic search spaces. This includes correct indexing, efficient retrieval, and standardized metadata description. Public libraries are faced with the challenge of adapting their systems, which are mostly geared towards Latin-written environments. The left-right movement of non-Latin scripts may require additional technical adjustments. This may create a new dependence on commercial providers who can offer specialized solutions. The integration of AI into the digital humanities brings new challenges and raises further questions regarding data sovereignty and the handling of data.

What experience have public libraries gained in indexing non-Latin texts from the MENA region in their search engines? How are such data described in a standardized way so that Middle Eastern studies can be used with their sources and primary texts in a world of linked-open data relationships, knowledge graphs and LLM? The paper is not intended to present solutions, but to stimulate a discussion among Middle East collections about data curation and the reusability of digital full texts. How visible are we with our non-Latin content in times of global data flows?

Eman Shahin, Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL), Jordan.
Unlocking hidden connections: digitizing Middle Eastern collections and enhancing access through linked open data.

The British International Research Institutes (BIRI) network spans regions including Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, North and East Africa, and Central and South Asia, safeguarding invaluable collections with a focus on the Middle East. These collections include photographs, maps, architectural records, rare books, and archaeological archives, all aimed at preserving and promoting access to the region's cultural heritage.

BIRI institutes, such as the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara (BIAA) and the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL), are engaged in digitisation projects that create extensive digital collections. These efforts make Middle Eastern archival materials globally accessible, allowing researchers and the public to engage with the region's cultural narratives while preserving these resources for future generations.

In 2022, the BIRI institutes launched a collaborative project, supported by The British Academy, to enhance digital access through Linked Open Data (LOD) principles. This initiative aligns with the FAIR framework—Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable—a unified platform that connects diverse archival materials into narratives for both public and academic audiences. A particular emphasis is placed on documenting and showcasing the contributions of overlooked women archaeologists, including those who worked in the Middle East.

By digitising and sharing these archival materials, the project underscores their interconnectedness and relevance to the broader study of the region's history and culture, ensuring these resources remain accessible for future generations.

This paper will explore how digital technologies, such as LOD principles and storytelling tools like ArcGIS StoryMaps, are reshaping access to archival materials. Besides, reflect on the transformative potential of digitisation

in preserving the Middle East's cultural heritage, fostering inclusivity, encouraging global collaboration, and enriching the historical narrative of the region.

Julie Lowe, University of Western Ontario/University of Toronto, Canada.
Bringing Middle East librarianship into the classroom: towards meaningful diversity.

There is growing awareness in LIS of the need to meaningfully address diversity, structural barriers, and the lingering effects of colonization. Although discussions on topics like racism, gender and Indigenous reconciliation are recurring themes in LIS classrooms, much work remains. Ongoing challenges include the meaningful integration of these subjects rather than superficial discussion, and the inclusion of viewpoints from a larger number of communities.

Middle East librarians and professors with related expertise can play a role in the meaningful diversification of LIS education. This objective motivated the creation of a new course at the University of Toronto entitled Comparative Information Traditions: Islamic Civilization. The class introduces LIS students to alternate views on knowledge classification, libraries, archives and book culture while challenging them to think critically about assumptions inherent in existing information institutions.

Drawing on my experience creating and delivering this course, this presentation examines how Middle East librarians and scholars can meaningfully diversify LIS education. I propose various topics from which librarians and scholars can select according to their expertise and audience. For example, contrasting Anglo-European notions of archive as place with pre-modern Middle Eastern archival practices challenges assumptions regarding the nature of an archive. Further, examination of manuscripts, knowledge classification and libraries in the pre-modern Middle East raises questions surrounding the colonial origin of certain collections in European and North

American libraries, the assumption that print is necessarily more objective than manuscript culture, and the biases inherent in classification schemes. In addition, the presentation addresses how to make these subjects approachable to LIS students without prior background in Middle East studies. Rather than providing a set template, I aim to provide ideas that Middle East librarians and scholars can adapt based on their expertise, audience and teaching format.

Felix Wiedemann, Bavarian State Library, Germany.

45 Years of MELCom Presentations – a quantitative overview.

This paper offers a quantitative overview of the presentations delivered at MELCom's first 45 conferences. It is based on publicly available data extracted from the conference programs on the MELCom website. The analysis highlights trends, developments, and constants in relation to participants, venues, and presentations. Key criteria examined include the geographic locations of venues and participants' institutions, the participants' sex, the languages used in presentations, and the topics covered. By taking a bird's-eye view of the conference presentations, this paper seeks to enrich our collective understanding of MELCom's history. It aims to provide valuable insights for both conference organizers and participants in evaluating MELCom's work over the past decades.



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