

# MELA *notes*

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MIDDLE EAST LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION

Number 37

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MELA NOTES

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MIDDLE EAST LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION

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Mela Notes is published three times a year, in winter, spring, and fall. It is distributed to members of the Association and to nonmember subscribers. Membership dues of \$10.00 bring Notes and other mailings. Subscriptions are \$10.00 per calendar year, or \$3.00 per issue for most back numbers. Address dues, requests for membership information, or subscriptions to Dona Straley, Secretary-Treasurer MELA, Main Library Rm. 308, 1858 Neil Avenue Mall, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

**FROM THE EDITOR**

On January 18-24, the streets of downtown Chicago were once again busy with librarians hurrying in and out as the American Library Association held its Mid-Winter Meeting at the Chicago Hilton and the Palmer House. Few MELA members attended the meeting. Those of us who did were drawn to the few meetings concerning Asian and African materials. There we exchanged ideas and discussed matters of concern to MELA members.

Thanks to Paul Sprachman for his generous help in proof reading this and previous issues, and to Palmira Brummett for typing and editing assistance.

Basima Bezirgan

MELA Notes Editor

**MELA 1985 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

The annual business meeting of the Middle East Librarians Association was held on 22 November 1985 at the Hyatt Regency in New Orleans. Abazar Sepehri (University of Texas), president, opened the meeting at 2 p.m.

James Pollack (Indiana University) spoke in remembrance of Frances C. Morton, who died in October.

Rodney Sarle (Library of Congress) reported on developments in the Overseas Operations Division of the Library of Congress. Mike Albin has returned to LC as chief of the Order Division; Chris Filstrup is serving as interim field director in Cairo. Sarle reported that Filstrup wishes to strengthen the program through the support of the participants, and will welcome comments on any aspects of the program. Other topics relating to the Cairo office included: 1) participants will be receiving separate notices of shipments; 2) if participants feel the lag time for receiving airmail newspaper subscriptions is too long, they should contact the office; 3) catalogers for Turkish and Armenian have been added to the staff; 4) the office would appreciate comments about the form and usefulness of annotations on preliminary catalog cards; 5) the office would like to hear from participants about how the subject profile might be reworked; 6) participants may return one copy of the preliminary card for any books which they have rejected, noting the reason for the rejection; 7) Filstrup hopes to travel to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, parts of North Africa and Cyprus; 8) the Egyptian government has for the first time allowed dollars to be used for purchasing publications to be exchanged at the market rate, with the result that participant dollars should stretch 50-75% further than anticipated.

Julian Witherell (Library of Congress) reported on changes in the African and Middle Eastern Division: 1) Chris Murphy has joined the division as Turkish and Armenian bibliographer, and Michael Grundberger as head of the Hebraica section; 2) Dorothy Stahle has been hired to work on NENUL, and has finished editing some 13,000 entries for the first volume, which will be going to press in early 1986; 3) future publications include guides to U.S.-Afghan and U.S.-Iran relations, Arabic dictionaries at the Library of Congress, translations of the Qur'an at LC, and U.S. documents on Turkey.

Basima Bezirgan (University of Chicago), on behalf of Martha Dukas (Boston Public Library), reported on the programs sponsored by the Asian and African Section of ACRL at the American Library Association meeting in July 1985.

Sepehri discussed Dukas' proposal for a joint MELA-MELCOM meeting in November 1986. The Executive Committee had expressed interest in such a meeting, but felt that there was not enough lead time for fund raising and planning. There were suggestions that such a meeting might coincide with IFLA in England in 1987.

Dona Straley (Ohio State University) reported on topics of interest being considered by the ALA/RTSD Committee on Cataloging: Asian and African Materials. As a result of the committee looking at the LC subject headings for the Ottoman Empire, Straley and a member of the Subject Analysis Committee are looking at the problem of name changes for political jurisdictions which also involve territorial changes.

Brenda Bickett (Georgetown University) chair of the MELA Technical Services Committee, reported that she will be collecting from members variant romanizations for names, publishers, and words and these will be published, along with the word or name in script, in MELA Notes. Patricia Myers-Hayer (Library of Congress) agreed to provide the LC romanized form of each word and name, as well as a list of reference books used at LC to determine the proper spelling. It is hoped that this will become a regular feature in MELA Notes. Suggested topics for discussion by the committee next year include retrospective conversion.

John Eilts (University of Michigan) summarized the results of the morning meeting of the Middle East co-operative microform project, at which the proposed by-laws were discussed. Eilts reported on the changes to the by-laws made during the morning meeting, and then moved that the by-laws be adopted. Bezirgan seconded the motion, which passed. Eilts moved that the current steering committee be authorized to draw up a statement of intention, to solicit interest for membership, and to open discussion with the Center for Research Libraries concerning a "home" for the project. The motion was seconded and passed. The steering committee consists of Eilts (chair), Bezirgan, Bickett, Meryle Gaston (New York University), Myers-Hayer, and Straley.

Eilts noted that the Arabic script union list supplement has not yet been published due to his not being able to find a microfilming company. He asked that anyone knowing of such a company contact him.

Eilts announced that funding sources are being explored to support an internship program for Middle East librarians in Cairo.

Bezirgan, editor of MELA Notes, expressed her thanks to Bruce Craig and the University of Chicago for their support. She reminded members to send changes of address to her. She asked whether book reviews should concentrate on reference materials and librarianship or on scholarly works; the members agreed that they preferred the former. Bezirgan advanced the idea that one issue each year of MELA Notes be devoted to a single theme. After discussion, it was agreed that this would be worth a trial issue; Bezirgan will choose a topic and solicit articles.

Straley, secretary/treasurer, announced that the Executive Committee had reluctantly agreed to a \$5.00 postage surcharge to all overseas memberships, effective 1 January 1987. Back issues of MELA Notes will cost \$4.00 beginning 1 January 1986. Straley reminded the members that according to the by-laws, a member will be dropped if his/her dues are more than two years in arrears. Straley reported on the association's finances. (A copy of the treasurer's report appears at the end of these minutes.)

Sepehri summarized his activities as president during the past year. He read the text of a letter written on behalf of the Association protesting U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO.

Sepehri announced the candidates for vice-president/president-elect: David Partington (Harvard University) and James Weinberger (Princeton University). Partington was elected by the membership.

Marsha Hamilton (Ohio State University) shared with the members items from various publications about Islam and the Middle East which are based on erroneous facts. After Discussion, Fawzi Khoury (University of Washington) moved that when such items come to MELA's attention, the Executive Committee forward them to MESA. The motion was seconded and passed. Bickett moved that in such cases, MELA contact the publisher and express its displeasure. This motion was seconded and passed. Any items of this nature should be sent to MELA Notes for publication.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

## MIDDLE EAST LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION

Treasurer's Report  
15 November 1984 - 1 November 1985INCOME

Balance 15 Nov. 1984	\$ 2079.69	
Memberships & subscriptions	1565.00	
Advertising (MELA Notes)	410.00	
Membership mailing list rental	120.00	
MELA Notes back issues	150.00	
Occasional papers no. 1	21.00	
Interest	157.59	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 4503.28</b>	<b>\$ 4503.28</b>

EXPENDITURES

MELA Notes	\$ 315.66	
Postage	336.49	
MELA 1984 annual meeting	128.59	
Photocopying	15.78	
Clerical supplies	26.80	
Bank fees	7.50	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 830.82</b>	<b>\$ 830.82</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>		<b>\$ 3672.46</b>

PAPERS DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MELA MEETING, NOVEMBER 1985  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Near or Middle East?: Choice of Name

Names--geographical and personally deserve special attention in librarianship. This is especially true in our days, in times in which the computer is depriving people of their names and replacing them by ID numbers. When we log on, we are asked to provide a USER ID, not a name. Geographic names are important in subject headings. Librarians are asked to provide a user interested in area study with the "latest and most comonly used" (1) term. Some geographic regions do have a specific, unique name. Take for example, the Caribbean. For others, the geographic name raises some questions, and so it is with the "Middle East".

The names Near East and Middle East pose a question. Both names are composed of two words the first of which denotes proximity, and the second denotes direction. Both names raise questions such as, near what?, middle of what?, east of what? Indeed, for Western Europe, the Middle East is in between the Near and the Far East. But it is not so for China or Japan, for whom the Middle East is the Middle West. For the Soviet Union, the Middle East is the South.

Some names used for the Middle East are unique and special. Such is the case with the Fertile Crescent. This name was applied to an area which covers only one part of the Middle East, and therefore cannot be used as a substitute for it. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the British name Near East became very popular. The name was usually associated with the territories of the Ottoman Empire, and hence, it included countries in South East Europe such as Greece and Yugoslavia. This is the name currently in use by the Library of Congress and by several departments and institutions such as the Near East Division of the State Department, the Near East Languages and Cultures Center, and the von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies -- both at the University of California in Los Angeles, etc. And if this confusion was not sufficient, there came about in 1902 another name coined by the British archeologist D.G. Hogarth, the "Nearer East", which included all of "south-eastern Europe below the oblique water-parting of the Balkans...all of the islands east of Corfu and Crete... and of the north-eastern corner of Africa..."(2).



The name Middle East was coined in 1902 by an American naval historian A.T. Mahan. The name coined by Mahan, was widely used by the Tehran correspondent of The Times of London, Valentine Chirol. "Chirol's use of the term made it familiar to a wide public" (3), and the use of the name by military personnel between the two World Wars and during World War II made it a popular name. And so the question is which of the two should one use -- the Near or the Middle East?

Scholars, and especially geographers such as the prominent geographer of the Middle East William B. Fisher, prefer to use the name Middle East, on the grounds of the physical and cultural factors of unity of the area.(4) Others have questioned the validity of the use of the name on the grounds that the area has had no cultural or political cohesiveness to warrant such use.(5)

An analysis of titles used in reference sources shows that most of them prefer to use the name Middle East. Indeed, a title search in ORION, the UCLA online catalog, conducted by the author on March 29, 1985, produced 187 titles (21.2%) using the name Near East as compared with 694 titles (78.7%) using the name Middle East. A similar result was obtained from a survey of the on-line catalog of the Library of Congress. This survey produced 412 titles (20.6%) using Near East, as compared with 1579 titles (79.3%) using Middle East. Similarly, the LC MAPS file produced 12 maps (16.4%) using Near East as compared with 61 maps (83.5%) using Middle East (6). Similar results were obtained from title analysis of current serials. Forty-eight (78.6%) of the serials published in the New Serial Titles between 1950 and 1970 have already used the name Middle East in their titles as compared with thirteen (21.3%) which used the name Near East. Between 1971 and 1975 only one serial used the Near East as compared to twenty-two using Middle East. All of the new serials dealing with the area in question published in 1983 have used the name Middle East. In addition, bibliographies of the area often use the name Middle East. A typical example would be Atiyeh's The Contemporary Middle East 1948-1973: a Selective and Annotated Bibliography, Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, 1975. And the name of this association is MELA -- Middle East Librarians Association, not Near East Librarians Association. This strongly supports my hypothesis that the trend in current literature is shifting to overwhelming acceptance of the name Middle East.

To satisfy the interest of our colleagues, the African Librarians, I would like to raise a question for which I don't think there is a definite answer. The question is which

African country (or countries) should be included within the Middle East? United Nations documents tend to use "West Asia", thereby excluding African countries. Cressey, (1960) used the name "Southwest Asia", but included a chapter on the African country -- Egypt -- in his analysis (7). In 1952, Fisher's classical text The Middle East: a Physical, Social, and Regional Geography, included only the eastern part of Libya. Sudan was excluded. In 1978, the same text included all of Libya, and most of Sudan. Some sources tend to include with the Middle East also the Maghrib area, and call it the Middle East and North Africa. A classic example is the annual EUROPA publication entitled The Middle East and North Africa.

Regardless of the question which African country (or countries) should be included within the Middle East, I call upon you all, to voice your concern, and let the Library of Congress know that it is about time to change the dated Subject Heading, Near East, and replace it with the current and more common name, the Middle East. The Library of Congress changed Spanish America to Latin America in 1962, and recently, with the advent of AACR2, Russia was changed to the Soviet Union. Why not switch to the use of the Subject Heading, Middle East, instead of Near East? I thank you all.

(1) Haykin, David J. Subject Headings: a Practical Guide. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1951, p. 8.

(2) Hogarth, D.G. The Nearer East. New York: Appleton, 1902, p. 2.

(3) Davison, Roderic. "Where is the Middle East?" Foreign Affairs 38:4 (July 1960): p. 668.

(4) Fisher, William B. "Unity and Diversity in the Middle East." Geographical Review 37:3 (1947): 415-435.

(5) See for example, Niki Keddi, "Is There a Middle East?" International Journal of Middle East Studies 4:3 (July 1974): 255-271.

(6) Survey results provided courtesy of Mr. John Schroeder of the Library of Congress on February 7, 1985.

(7) Cressey, George. Crossroads: Land and Life in Southwest Asia. Chicago: Lippincott, 1960.

Dr. Eliezer Chammou  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University Research Library

Analysis of the Reference Questions at the Islamic Studies Library

Introduction:

The Institute of Islamic Studies in Montreal opened its doors in Divinity Hall of McGill University with only a few students, in September, 1952. Dr. Wilfred C. Smith, the founder of the Institute, was a Canadian. Until that time there had been no organization in any university in Canada or the United States with the specific purpose of pursuing a detailed study of Islam.

When classes opened, the Institute possessed a library of perhaps fifty books. Students were often compelled to borrow books from the personal collections of their professors. Obviously, a solid and broad collection of Islamic material in the form of a scientifically ordered library was essential, and the assembling of a library was a central concern of Professor Smith.

In 1955 a professional orientalist librarian by the name of William J. Watson (1) of Ottawa was appointed. Professor Smith and Mr. Watson became close friends and together they devised a new cataloging system to suit Islamic materials.(2)

In 1957 Smith discussed the need for a more meaningful dialog between Christians and Muslims with the Rockefeller Foundation, as a result of which a grant of \$500,000 was received. This enabled him to move the Institute and its library to an old but important building, at the top of the mountain on Redpath Crescent.(3)

In January, 1965 the Institute and its library, moved into the Stephen Leacock Building, on the campus of McGill University where at least it had the physical facilities for conducting its work in proper fashion.

Due to shortage of space, the Institute and its library moved in October, 1983 again and this time to the newly renovated Morrice Hall, formerly a Presbyterian Chapel.(4)

The Islamic Studies Library has witnessed an explosion in the increase of its volumes and users as shown in Table 1. Thus, within twenty years the collection has increased approximately four times, the students increased by more than three fold and the users by an estimated eight to ten fold, noting that the students at present are not only from the

Institute of Islamic Studies but others that need additional attention. Unfortunately the staff has decreased by half.

The reference questions which are recorded on the monthly statistical sheet are: directional, instructional and factual. These are handled, among other things, by the Public Services Supervisor. (5) There is no separate reference desk as such. Directional reference comprises straight forward questions. Instructional involves teaching the user how to utilize the reference tools. Factual questions are how to find facts for the user. Only factual references get recorded, solved and written out on specific reference forms. The users of the Islamic Studies Library are stated in the following categories:

1. Professors and graduates of the Institute of Islamic Studies.
2. Professors and students of McGill University.
3. Professors and students of Quebec Universities.
4. Professors and students of Ontario Universities.
5. McGill University Libraries.
6. Federal and Provincial Governments.
7. Researchers coming at different intervals from all over the world; especially during the summer months.
8. Media, publishing companies and film makers.
9. Business libraries.

#### Problems/Some Solutions:

Examination of Smith's Concise Organization of Material at the Islamic Studies Library shows that the classification system is divided into five different headings and sub-headings, but there is more to it than appears:

Under Section A. Reference:

- AB/bibliography takes up all the classification system, so does AE.

-AL/language is divided into 117 languages and dialects. Almost every Islamic language and dialect is represented, at least by a dictionary or a grammar book.

Under Section C. Islam, Classical. Prior to 1800

-C8/sects is divided into 37 divisions

-C9/history is divided into 47 historical subdivisions.

-C11/literature is divided under the four major Islamic languages: Arabic (6) Persian, Turkish and Urdu.

Under General Geographical Divisions

-Each of these major countries is divided into further geographical subdivisions totaling up to 191 countries. We study each of the 191 countries from the following subject angles:

1. Islam/general
2. Muslim sects
3. Education

4. History
5. Economics, politics, law
6. Sociology
7. Minorities
8. Geography, travel
9. Literature, literary criticism
10. Press
11. Art, culture, architecture, music
12. Technology, science, agriculture, medicine

The bulk of the material was classified under Smith. The library started its own subject headings in the early seventies.(7) The library switched to L/C in January, 1985. There will be a RECON of Smith to Fiche.(8)

At McLennan, McGill's Central Library, librarians who work at the reference department are divided according to their language abilities and subject specialties. At the Islamic Studies Library, I am expected to be a 'Jack of All Trades'! I am expected to handle reference questions in several languages, many subjects and different historical periods. To facilitate my job I keep an academic profile on all our professors, as well as a list of the graduate students of the Institute, their thesis topics and their academic advisors. I also read most of the current journals and keep an Islamic clippings file. When I answer a reference question my strategy is to find under which of the following categories it falls: nuisance, trivia, transliteration, translation, element entries, classifications, current events, technical, teaching, advanced reference.

Examples:

#### Nuisance

The library receives some telephone calls which are disagreeable and annoying. A person called and wanted to know about 'voodoo in Islam'. She was absolutely sure that a Muslim man had practiced black magic on her. Calming down this caller was time consuming. She needed help but she was asking for it in the wrong place, obviously!

#### Trivia

Can you give me the population count of Kuwait, Jordan, Oman and Yemen? What is the equivalent of the 4th Sha ban, 1349 in the Christian Calendar? A film maker needs a picture of oil fields with workers and also pictures of camels in different positions?

Transliteration

The transliteration questions are usually related to the Islamic Studies transliteration system and to the card catalog or when Islamic Studies students are putting the final touches on their theses. Other transliteration questions related to Library of Congress, Encyclopedia of Islam, Brockelmann's GAL, or SI transliteration schemes are also quite apparent.

Translation

What is the meaning of مجزوب in the mystical sense? = possessed.

What is my access word, in the Encyclopedia of Islam, for the wars of the Prophet Muhammad? Is it حروب or مفازى

What is the Arabic word for sacrificial lamb? = ذبيحة

What is the judicial or theological term for justification vs. reprobation, criticism vs. rejection, promise vs. threat? I need the terms in Arabic. = العهد / الوعيد.

Element Divisions

There are a lot of reference questions related to the classical Arabic name elements: Kunyah, Ism, Patronymic, Laqab, Nisbah, Takhalluṣ, and 'Unwān. In the absence of protocol for element entry, the Arabic specialist recataloged the same book over and over, sometimes under the geographical element, sometimes under the religious affiliation, and other times under Ibn and Abū. When the cards were eventually corrected, not enough cross-references from the old element to the newly established element were made. It all made retrieval of Arabic material one big mess. Rendering reference in this section becomes almost a work of detection requiring plenty of imagination and guess work.

Classification

The elasticity and fullness of Smith's Classification has played a great role in retrieval of different subject matter, that otherwise would have been impossible to trace under Mr. Ali's subject headings and the newly established L/C subject headings. The following examples attest to it:

I would like to find material on the Waṭṭāsis at Marrākush.  
I need some books on the Ziyāris of Ṭabaristān.  
Do you have books on an Islamic sect called Shabak?

Current Events

I need President Reagan's Peace Proposal announced in 1982. Is Erzurum still a military base?

Technical Help

Mainly help is required with the card catalogs and McGill COM Catalog. Graduate students of Islamic Studies also need attention regarding bibliographical entries for their term papers and theses.

Teaching

Teaching graduates and undergraduates how to use the Islamic Studies reference tools occupies a big portion of the reference work at this library; and it is rendered in many subjects and languages.

Advanced Reference

For this type of reference, appointments are made in advance for a period of one hour per session. There are two categories under advanced reference:

a) Consultation:

Graduate student/McGill/Urban Planning

Topic: Migration in Iraq from the rural areas to the capital.

Professor/Islamic Studies

Topic: Mustafa al-Maraghi; rector of al-Azhar. The patron needs bibliographic information, articles in Arabic only.

Graduate student/University of Montreal

Topic: Impact of Iranian Revolution on Iranian Society.

b) Evaluation:

Cyclical Review-Italian Department: Venice and the Islamic World. Do we need the Middle East Annual, edited by Dr. Partington, at the Islamic Studies Library or shall we send it to McLennan Library?

Since 1983, I have been giving sessions on Library-Use Instruction(9), Classification and other sessions on the practical use of the Islamic Studies Library. In September 1985, I gave the new graduates an orientation seminar on Islamic Reference Tools which was part of the course 397-603A Research Materials for Islamic Studies. The above sessions have produced excellent results in reducing the number of

elementary questions, but advanced reference questions are still asked.(10)

The Public Services Section consists of: circulation, reserve, reference services (including Interlibrary Loans) and administration. Reference Services occupies more than 60% of my time. I run the Public services alone from 9-5p.m. The Library is run by casuals in the evening and other times.(11) Since 1981 the mix of graduate students from Library School and graduate students from the Institute manning the desk has produced the best possible results.(12)

Librarians are faced with the increasing need to evaluate their services. Reference work remains one of the more difficult areas to assess, let alone the evaluation of this library's reference work. Samuel Rothstein in his session on Reference Evaluation at the Canadian Library Association in 1985, maintained that traditional reference statistics of: number of reference questions, Interlibrary Loan transactions, computerized bibliographic searches and library tours, fail to represent the range and character of academic reference services. The present statistical recording of the references at the library under the categories of directional, referential and factual does not present the true picture.

For the past three years, the head librarian has had no subject background in the field and no skills in Islamic languages. I had to adjust to these radical changes, and also inherited answering the advanced reference questions which used to be dealt with by the head librarian and sometimes by the cataloger(13), Mr. Jan Weryho, who was moved to the Cataloging Department in the Central Library in 1982.

(A special problem) is to reduce user frustration among the Muslim community. Some of these users are educated and others are not. Even the educated ones have language problems and hence difficulty in articulating situations. Our duty is to serve our McGill clients first, but these others also need attention and service. Further research is needed to study the information needs of this special category of users and the library's responsiveness to them.(14)

It has been pointed out that the Islamic Studies Library does not have enough indexes for its users. It is rather naive to assume that in 1980 there should have been an index for the Iran-Iraq war. It was only in the first quarter of 1982 that Library of Congress first created the subject heading "Iraqi-Iranian Conflict, 1980-".

#### Recommendations



1. Appointment of a reference librarian at the Islamic Studies Library is essential.
2. The reference librarian should assist the head librarian in: Readers Services, Collection Development, and Fund Raising.
3. For evaluation purposes it is essential to recognize the special nature of the field. Therefore, reference questions at the Islamic Studies Library ought to be compared, analysed and studied with similar centres, in Columbia, Harvard, Michigan and Princeton.(15)
4. Islamic Bibliographical Instruction should be offered as a half course (3 credits) and should be taught by the reference librarian.(16)
5. The access to various computerized Islamic and Middle Eastern Bibliographical retrieval systems should be explored.
6. The Islamic Studies Library in collaboration with the Institute of Islamic Studies should apply for some funds either from the Federal or Provincial Government if they want the library to continue providing reference services to the Muslim community. By providing services and facilitating the Muslim community's use of the collection the library and its staff are playing the role of cultural breakers.
7. We should target justifying the reference services to the McGill Library's chief administrators. They are the people who make the decisions about allocating funds. We have already discussed that traditional evaluation should not be relied on totally and that statistics should be gathered from circulation, tours, shelving, reserves, and interlibrary loans. This, together with the results of the 'Questionnaire of Users', should be tabulated and presented to the McGill Library's chief administrators.

### Conclusion

The rethinking of concepts and the role of the Islamic Studies Library in meeting information needs is necessary because services must expand smoothly, rationally, judiciously and under controlled conditions. The Islamic Studies Library is a mine of intellectual resources. It is a unique library of its kind in Canada and a Mecca for Islamic researchers from all over the world.

Islamic reference librarians are an endangered species.(17) There are very few of them in Canada and they need to be protected and preserved. At the Islamic Studies Library, there is not even a sign saying: "Information" or "Reference" as if reference is indeed the "Secret Service".(18) The appointment of a reference librarian at the Islamic Studies Library will be good preparation for the forthcoming computerization at the McGill University Libraries.

The future lies in our hands: in our attitudes, opinions, flexibility, tendencies, vision and prejudices. We should not be afraid to take bold steps in making this library run better. I have faith in McGill, therefore, we will.

Notes: (1) Watson is now the Assistant Director of University of British Columbia Libraries.

(2) Smith and Watson also expanded the author Cutter Tables of Ibn and Abū which cover some three thousand Arabic names.

(3) C.J. Adams, "The Institute of Islamic Studies," Canadian Geographical Journal, July 1962, said: "High on the south side of Mount Royal, on a site overlooking the centre of Montreal and St. Lawrence River, stands a building that houses a unique Canadian Institution known as the Institute for Islamic Studies". p. 7.

(4) In 1882 David Morrice built a magnificent hall for Montreal Presbyterian College - The David Morrice Hall. David Morrice, a textile manufacturer was one of Montreal's richest Presbyterian businessmen.

(5) Public Services supervisor, Salwa Ferahan, handles all the reference questions between 9-5p.m. weekdays except for one hour and a half official breaks. The library has 60 service hours weekdays and 8 service hours weekends, totalling 68 hours of service per week

(6) Since Dr. I. Boullata started teaching the course Arabic Literature this section has expanded in a systematic and constructive way.

(7) Mr. M. 'Ali did his own subject headings believing that L/C was deficient in the field of Islamic subject headings!

(8) McLennan, McGill's Central Library is undergoing an enormous project of RECON under the RECON Project manager, Donna Duncan. The Islamic Studies Library might RECON either to L/C or Smith.

(9) Library-Use Instruction also provided on the undergraduate level: two courses for Political Science and one course for the History Department.

(10) These advanced reference questions are related to the graduate students' thesis topics. Professors and Institute students require books and articles which require verification especially in Arabic sources, for the purpose of Interlibrary Loans.

(11) The supervisor batches: the filing of circulation cards, book returns and other clerical work for the casuals to do.

(12) There has been a lot of discussion related to non-professionals doing the reference work. Jeffrey St. Clair and Rao Aluri, "Staffing the Reference Desk: Professionals or NonProfessionals?," The Journal of Academic Librarianship, no. 3 (1977) pp. 149-153, stated that carefully trained non-professionals at the reference desk can completely answer 80 percent of the questions.

(13) Many libraries are trying catalogers and reference librarians taking turns at each others jobs, see David Peele's "Staffing the Reference Desk," Library Journal, (September, 1980) pp. 1708-1711.

(14) Although this is not directly related it will serve as an important document for the purpose of comparison. Thomas Childers, The Information-Poor in America. (Metuchen, N. J., Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1975). Also see Thomas Childers and Joyce Post, "The blue collar adult's information needs, seeking behavior and use." Final Report, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Office of Libraries and Learning Resources, March, 1976. Project No. L0029JA, p. 4.

(15) I. Rider, "Rothstein advocates taking new look at usual evaluation and statistics", Feliciter, (July-August, 1985) p. 14, stated that the analysing function makes the information gathered more meaningful and it is here that comparisons with other libraries should be made. See also, S. Rothstein, "The Hidden Agenda in the Measurement and Evaluation of Reference Service, or, How to Make a Case for Yourself," The Reference Librarian, 11, (Fall-Winter, 1984) pp. 45-52.

(16) Jacquelyn M. Morris, "A Philosophical Defense of a Credit Course," Proceedings from the South-Eastern Conference on Approaches to Bibliographic Instruction. (Charleston, S.C., College of Charleston Library Associates, 1980), p. 25.

(17) this term was borrowed from: Rao Aluri and Jeffrey St. Clair, "Academic Reference Librarians: An Endangered Species?," Journal of Academic Librarianship, 4 (1978) pp. 82-84.

(18) This will strengthen the point of Chen and Herson along with others who have done research proving that reference is indeed the secret service. Chng-Chih Chen and Peter Herson, Information Seeking and Anticipating User Needs. (New York, Neal Schuman, 1982).

Salwa Ferahian  
McGill University

What Is Islamic Literature? A Book Selector's Dilemma

The question first occurred to me when I was selecting materials for the Islamic Studies Library at McGill University (Montreal). My only criterion was that every item had to be relevant to Islam or to Islamic civilization in the widest meaning of the term. I was not worried by budgetary restraints. I never was responsible for the budget. There was always a boss who would tailor my preliminary selection to fit the budget, so, although I had been occasionally accused of over-selecting, I felt like a swimmer on a safety leash. Nor was I restricted by the current curriculum of the Institute of Islamic Studies. If Albanian or Uzbek literature were not taught in the Institute at the time, there was always the possibility they might be taught in the future. And of course you never know, somebody may want to write a Ph.D. thesis about Albania or Uzbekistan!

This paper will limit itself to the field of literature or belles-lettres leaving aside such subjects as history, comparative religion, or sociology. What is Islamic literature? Is it a counter-part of Christian literature? The term Christian literature brings to our minds strictly theological material, or possibly, by extension, literature with a specifically Christian message such as the poems of John Milton or the novels of G.K. Chesterton. The concept of Islamic literature is however much wider: it includes not only Muslim theological works, but all literature produced by Muslims, including nominal non-practicing Muslims. We can even go further and claim all literature in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other Islamic languages. The definition of what is an Islamic language is relatively easy: a language the majority of whose speakers are Muslims. These Islamic languages share certain other characteristics besides the religion of the majority of the speakers: all of them contain in larger or smaller proportions a number of Arabic loan words. Most of them have been written in the Arabic alphabet, although nowadays many of them use the Roman or Cyrillic characters. Finally their poetical tradition has in most cases used forms which can be traced to classical Arabic poetry.

Of course if we accept all Arabic and Persian literature as Islamic we must accept the contributions of non-Muslim authors (Jews and Christians in the case of Arabic, Zoroastrians and Hindus in case of Persian, etc.). I once mentioned to a Lebanese Maronite student that the Islamic Studies Library contained the works of Khalil Gibran. "But

Gibran was not a Muslim!" was the indignant reaction. True, Gibran was a Christian, but he was also a leading modern Arabic author. Actually Arabic literature is at least a century older than Islam. The rich pre-Islamic Arabic poetry was the exclusive domain of Christians, Jews and pagans. In spite of the stigma of paganism attached to it (jāhiliyah, literally "ignorance") it was very seriously studied by Muslim philologists who felt that it was a necessary tool for understanding the linguistic background of the Qur'ān without prejudice to the doctrine of its divine origin. In fact all the great Qur'ānic scholars were also experts on ancient Arabic poetry. We may thus say with our tongue in our cheek that Islamic literature had preceded Islam!

Thus we see that those non-Muslims who have written in Arabic or in other Islamic languages have been accepted as part of their literary heritage.(1) Some Jews however have written their Arabic or their Persian in Hebrew characters, producing a large body of literature called Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian, virtually unknown to the Muslim majority of the Arabic and Persian reading public.(2) Do we accept it as Islamic literature?

A Christian counterpart of Judeo-Arabic had been Karshūni or Arabic written in Syriac characters. Its use however was almost entirely limited to liturgical works and few Arab Christians besides the clergy could read it.(3) Maltese language and literature present a very different problem. Maltese is structurally a North African Arabic dialect with many Italian loanwords written in Roman characters. The Maltese are (almost) all Christians and their literature (oldest known text dating from the 15th century) (4) has been inspired more by Italian than classical Arabic models.(5) Can we accept it as Islamic literature? Maltese has the unusual distinction (a dubious one in the opinion of many Arabs) of being the only Arabic dialect to have developed a written literature.

Parallel with Maltese is the case of the various non-Muslim Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, professing Orthodox Christianity, Judaism (the Karaims) or Buddhism. Are their literatures to be accepted as Islamic? The non-Muslim Turkic literary tradition is quite old, going at least as far as the 14th century Codex Cumanicus, written in Roman characters six centuries before Ataturk.

We have spoken about the literary contribution of non-Muslims to Islamic languages, or to dialects closely related to Islamic languages. But the opposite has also

happened, for Muslims have made their contribution to European literature. First of all we have the special case of Albanian, the only European language qualifying to be called Islamic if we take the religion of the majority of speakers as the criterion. (No doubt the Government of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania would strongly object to Albanian being labelled an Islamic language!) We must accept as Islamic literature the works of Albanian Muslims, Christians and professed atheists, but should we include the literature of the 500 year old exclusively Christian Albanian community of Italy?

Coming now to the other "non-Islamic" languages of Europe we must first note the specifically Islamic form some of these languages had taken through the adoption of the Arabic script. The best known case is of course Aljamiado (from Arabic al-Ajamiyah, originally "Persian" hence "foreign") or Spanish written in Arabic characters. Although most Aljamiado literature has been published in Roman transcription it gets little attention in histories of Spanish literature. Should it be considered the domain of Orientalists or Hispanists?

The term Aljamiado has acquired a wider use to mean any Western language written in Arabic characters by a Muslim minority. The list is quite varied: besides Spanish it includes Serbo-Croatian, Greek, Polish, Byelorussian and Afrikaans (listed in the Library of Congress Subject Headings under the picturesque name of "Arabic-Afrikaans dialect").(7) Only the Spanish and Serbo-Croatian "Aljamiados" however possess to my knowledge a large amount of poetry or belles-lettres, although some Greek verses had been attributed to no less a figure than Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.(8)

The various forms of Aljamiado were written by Muslim authors exclusively for Muslim readers. More recently however Muslims have written in various Western languages for the general reading public. The earliest example was probably that of al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Wazzān, a Moroccan better known as Leo Africanus who in 1526 wrote his Descrizione dell'Africa in Italian. It is only in the 20th century however that a really large number of Muslims have chosen to produce poetry, fiction, and other literary genres in Western languages, mostly North Africans and Lebanese writing in French or Indians and Pakistanis writing in English. Do we accept their writings as Islamic literature or is it simply English and French literature written by foreigners? There is also the occasional case of a Western convert to Islam. We have the novels of Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, author of what most Muslims consider to be the best English translation of the Qur'ān. Speaking of Islamic literature in English, do

we accept the English works of Khalil Gibran, a Christian Arab who was also a major Arabic literary figure? Can we study a man's creativity in one language while ignoring it in another?

So far we have spoken about literature in Islamic languages (or related dialects) produced by non-Muslims or literature in Western languages produced by Muslims. There exists however a literature, produced by non-Muslims, in non-Islamic languages which I would suggest qualifies to be called Islamic culturally, namely literature imitating Islamic (Arabic, Persian or other) literary style. Here we would place much of Georgian epic poetry inspired by Persian models or the Hebrew poetry of medieval Spain using Arabic metres. Even the terms used to describe these medieval Hebrew poems are Arabic: qasidah, muwashshah. (9) There is no evidence of Christian Spanish poets consciously imitating Arabic models, yet what is most striking about much Spanish poetry, especially but not exclusively of the genre called romance is the monorhyme typical of Arabic, Persian, Urdu and other Islamic poetry. Indeed Spanish is the only Western language which has used the monorhyme in its poetry to a large extent. I would go as far as to suggest that in romance poetry we see one of the most conspicuous, besides architecture and music, Arabic influences upon Spanish culture. To use an architectural comparison, the poems of St. John of the Cross are as "Islamic" as the mudejar churches of Toledo. In other Western languages attempts to imitate Oriental style (as opposed to Oriental subject matter) are only sporadic. In English perhaps the most successful example is Sir Richard Burton's Kasidah, supposedly translated from the Persian of a certain Hāji Abdū. It does not have the monorhyme of a genuine Arabic or Persian qasidah (which may be more difficult to produce in English than in Spanish), but it does use one of the Arabic metres, the bahr lawil. The ideas however are Burton's own, and this makes the poem a very original work, not just an exercise in the use of Oriental local color which I feel is often the case with the Oriental poems of James Elroy Flecker.

We have now reached the border of what may be called Islamic literature, even by the extended use of the term. Across the border but adjacent to it is the literature of struggle against Islamic expansion. The Spanish epic, Poema de Mio Cid is an obvious example. It contains long passages using the single rhyme in the romancero tradition, but understandably the anonymous author could not keep it up in a poem of that length. At the other corner of Europe conquered by Islam we find the so-called "klephtic" ballads of the Greeks. The upward evolution of the modern Greek word

klephtēs (ancient Greek kleptēs) from "thief" through "brigand" to a guerilla fighter against the Turkish occupation is interesting. The Greeks' neighbors, the Serbs had likewise produced a very large body of oral poetry of resistance against the Turks, first collected and written down by the 19th century scholar Vuk Karadžić. Most of that literature of resistance against Islam, whether produced in Spain or in the Balkan Peninsula had been the work of rebellious dhimmīs or Christians living under Muslim rule. (According to Gerald Brenan, the author of the Poema del Cid was a mozarabe or Spanish Christian born under Arab rule).(10) As such they were quite familiar with the culture of the Muslims, either Moors or Turks, or at least as familiar as a subject can become with the culture of an alien ruler of a different faith. Understandably biased against their Muslim enemies they nevertheless grudgingly granted them certain military virtues. After all we have to grant a certain heroic grandeur to our enemies, for otherwise where is our own glory? To draw a musical parallel I had been struck by the number of Turkish motifs in Tchaikovsky's Slavonic March composed on the occasion of the Turko-Serbian War of 1876. Of course Tchaikovsky as a good Orthodox Slav sympathized with the Serbs. His use of Turkish motifs was either deliberate (like his use of the Marseillaise in the 1812 Overture) or it implied an acknowledgement of the strong Turkish influence upon Serbian music.

We are now definitely outside the sphere of Islamic literature although we can still feel its influence. Western poetry and fiction about Islamic countries is of some interest, not so much for what it can tell us about Islam, as for what it can tell us about the Western perceptions of Islam. This literature has been severely criticized by an Arab professor of English literature at Columbia University, Edward Said in his controversial book Orientalism (11) as responsible for the stereotyped image of the Oriental and thus helping, sometimes consciously sometimes not, the cause of Western imperialism. Yet Professor Said reserves his harshest criticism not so much for creative authors, poets or novelists as for Orientalist scholars. After all, creative authors create fantasies which need not be taken seriously. Scholars on the other hand claim to speak with authority which they misuse if they present a distorted picture.

I have tried to demonstrate in this paper that the line between Islamic and non-Islamic literature is not clear cut, with much material falling in between. I have not attempted to write a guideline for selectors of Islamic literature. My examples have been drawn almost exclusively from the northern frontier of Islam or the border between the world of Islam



and Christian Europe, with some references to the Jewish role. I have not touched the southern or African frontier, represented by Swahili and Hausa or by the languages of Ethiopia. Nor have I touched the Eastern frontier, the meeting place of Islam and Hindu culture in India and Indonesia, Islam and Buddhism in Sinkiang, Burma or southern Thailand, Islam and Christendom in the Phillipines. I do not wish to underestimate the importance of these areas or their literatures, but I have had very little contact with them as student, cataloger, or book selector. Of one thing however I am certain: the line between Islamic and non-Islamic literature in those areas is surely as vague as on the European frontier.

Notes:

- (1) For Christian Arab authors see Graf, Georg. Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur. Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946-53. 5 v. (Studi e testi). For Jewish Arab authors see Steinschneider, Moritz, Die arabische Literatur der Juden. Frankfort a.M.: J. Kauffmann, 1902.
- (2) See Asmussen, Jes P. Jewish-Persian texts. Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1968. (Iranische Texte). Also Rypka, Jan, History of Iranian Literature. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1968, p. 737-740: "An outline of Judeo-Persian literature".
- (3) Troupeau, G. "Karshūni". In The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New edition. vol. 4, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978, p. 671.
- (4) Wettinger, G. and Fsadni, M. Peter Caxare's Cantilena: a poem in medieval Maltese. Malta: Lux Press, 1968.
- (5) A Maltese Anthology. A.J. Arberry. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.
- (6) Akiner, Shirin. Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union. London: Kegan Paul, 1983. Appendix: "Non-Muslim Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union", p. 384-437.
- (7) Library of Congress Subject Headings. 9th ed. Washington: Library of Congress, 1980. v.1, p. 115.
- (8) Gölpınarlı, Abdülbaki. Mevlana Celaleddin. 2ci basım. Istanbul: Indilap Kitabevi, 1952, p. 254-[259]. Also Burguiere, P. et Mantran, R. "Quelques vers grecs du XIIIe siecle en caracteres arabes: . In Byzantion, v. 22, 1952, p. 63-80.

- (9) The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse. T. Carmi. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York: Penguin Books, 1981.
- (10) Brenan, Gerald. The Literature of the Spanish People. New York: Meridian books, 1957, p. 42.
- (11) Said, Edward W. Orientalism. New York: Random House, 1978.

Jan W. Weryho  
Montreal

ARTICLE

Islamic and Other Arabic Script Manuscripts in North America.  
Pt. 6

In Memoriam Seid Karic

روحوديته اوجه مات  
روسرو پازته نا زانات  
بوغ چه راتي برکات  
پراويم پوتم ايچيته

I met him for the first time at the University of Chicago and he introduced me to his friend Avdic on Larabee street, another Muslim of Yugoslav extraction whose hospitality I have enjoyed. The third in this group of friends was Sirovic whom many of us remember as purveyor of Arabic books from Cairo. All three passed away after they followed in life the precepts proffered in the above motto in Bosnian Serbocroatian with admixtures of Islamic religious terms and expressed in Arabic characters:

"Attend the Friday worship,  
Be attentive at your work,  
God will grant you then a blessing,  
On the right path you will stay."

The following article is devoted to the memory of these three men. May they rest in peace!

Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine  
10 Shattuck Street  
Boston, MA 02115

Contact Person: Richard J. Wolfe, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Date of inventory: 30 July, 1985.

1. al-Kutubī, Yūsuf ibn Ismāʿil al-Juwaynī (?), fl. 1310 A.D. Mā lā yaṣāʿu al-tabīb jahluh. Written in a rather small naskh hand of the 17th or 18th century; some of the headings in larger script are in red ink, The 255 fols. measure 18.2 x 27.2 cm.; the written surface measures 11.5 x 20 cm.; 35 lines to page; catchwords. Some marginalia. Whole page ʿunwan in gold and blue. Paper is strong and off-white. The brown leather binding with flap is stamped in color which is worn. Some worm holes and staining. Purchase, Reference: GAL II 169, S 219 (starts as Berlin [Ahlwardt] 6427). Call no. Ballard II. 740.

2. al-Anṣārī, ʿAlī ibn Ḥasan (known as Zayn al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, d. 806 H./1403 A.D. Ikhtiyārāt-i badiʿi. Persian materia medica written in medium size, clear naskh in 863 H./1458 A.D. (Date seems, however to have been tampered with). 350 fols. measure 19.2 x 25.5 cm.; the written surface measures 11 x 17.5 cm. 16 lines to page; catchwords and marginalia. Red headings. The paper is brown and partially glazed. The rather modern red leather binding is gilt stamped. Purchased 1955. Begins similar to VOHD 14, 263 and 335; and Cambridge (Browne) 212. Call no. Ballard II. 831.

3. Ibn Sīnā, al-Qānūnī known in the West as Avicenna, 980?-1037. al-Qānūn fī al-tibb. Copied in very small naskh in 709 H./1309-1310 A.D. by ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Tarkhānī. The 318 fols. measure 14 x 22.7 cm.; the written surface measures 10 x 18.5 cm. and is ruled. 49 lines to page; catchwords; occasional marginalia. The paper is rather thick and light brown. The leather binding is gilt stamped. Belongs to the Solomon M. Hyams collection and is listed in James F. Ballard. A Catalog of the medieval and Renaissance manuscripts and incunabula in the Boston Medical Library. Boston, 1944, p. 8. Reference GAL S I p. 823, no. 82; starts as Būlāq ed. of 1294. Call no. Ballard I. 9.

4. Ibn al-Nafīs, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn abū al-Ḥasam ʿAlī ibn abī al-Ḥazm al-Qurashī, d. 1288 A.D. Sharh al-Qānūn. Commentary on the Qānūn of Ibn Sīnā copied in medium size cursive, sparingly dotted naskh. The 270 unnumbered fols. measure 19 x 27 cm.; the written surface measures 16 x 22 cm. 34 lines to page; some marginalia; headings in red. The paper is generally off-white but some of the fols. are red; texture is strong. The brown leather binding is blind tooled. The ms. is dated 759 H./1358 A.D. Reference: GAL S I 898f; incipit similar to Berlin (Ahlwardt) 6272. Printed. Part of the William Norton Bullard collection. Listed in Ballard (as preceding item), p. 8. Call no. Ballard I. 9.

Tulane University Libraries  
Howard-Tilton Memorial Library  
Tulane University  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

Contact person: Sylvia V. Metzinger, Rare Books Librarian  
Inventory taken: May 20, 1985 (from xerox)

1. Bible. O.T. Sirach. Arabic. Kitāb Yashū' ibn Sirākh (sic!). Copied in 18th or 19th century medium size naskh (except for fol. 1 v, the script of which is somewhat larger, crude and of a much later date). the 101 fols. measure ab. 10 x 15 cm.; the written surface measures ab. 7 x 12 cm. (varies). 11 lines to page. Paper is off-white and laid with faint watermark. Binding of very worn cloth over boards. Slight worming in early fols. not affecting the text. In a few places fols. have been repaired with patches and text restored. Text does not entirely agree with that of the Propaganda Fide edition of 1671 nor with that of the London Polyglot of 1655-7.

Miami University Libraries  
The Walter Havighurst Special Collections

Contact person: Helen Ball, Curator, Special Collections  
Date of inventory: June-July 1985 (from xeroxed pages)

1. Koran. copied in small legible naskh by Sa'udat al-Hāfiz Muḥammad al-Rushdī, one of the pupils of Muḥammad al-Zahñī or al-Zuhñī, probably late 19th century to early 20th century. Overall measurements of the 302 fols. is 13 x 20.5 cm.; the written surface measuring 7 x 13 cm. is ruled 15 lines to page; catchwords. The usual Koranic illuminations are rather crude. The paper is smooth, light tan and glazed. The leather binding with flap is gilt stamped. Gift of Professor Goldman, received by the library in 1982.

2. Fragment from a larger Persian biographical work, probably the Ta'rikh-i tavallud va vafāt-i pādīshāhān, covering the life of Bābur Shāh (888/1483-937/1530). Written in cursive, medium size nasta'liq of the 18th or 19th century. Overall measurements 19.3 x 27.5 cm.; the written surface measures 12.7 x 22 cm. 19 lines to page; catchwords. paper is smooth, off-white and glazed. The leather binding with flap is gilt tooled.

Date 1841 given in the ms. may be the date of bequest to the library. reference: Storey, Persian Literature, p. 157 (unverified) shelf no. 1439.

Dr. Miroslav Krek

**PUBLISHING IN IRAN: CALM AFTER STORM!**

The book market in Iran is reported to be in a state of stagnation after several years of relative activeness brought about by the Islamic Revolution. Price increases, scarcity of paper, subject repetition, and diminishing interest in writing are among the reasons cited for the present dwindling book sales. A sampling of views taken from among one hundred book-reading individuals in Tehran by the Persian periodical Hadaf has produced the following results:

Thirty percent of those questioned complained that new books are written mostly on the same or related subjects and have no appeal to readers; 15% gave the high cost of books as the main reason for reduced book sales; 25% expressed lack of time and patience as an obstacle to reading; 15% considered themselves as steady readers but said they had difficulty in finding old books which were worth reading; and the remaining 15% said they were going back to old novels such as "Ghurrish-ı tūfān" and "Binavāyān".

The Hadaf reporter adds, "Some believe that an excessive scrutiny on the part of authorities may be responsible for diminished interest by writers in producing new and original works." Yet another view is that people are too occupied with their day-to-day problems to spare any time for purchasing or reading books. Sayyid Mustafā Kitābchī of Intishārāt-ı İlmiyah-ı Islāmiyah says that in comparison to previous years, book sales have dropped by 90%. He calls the situation in 1364 (i.e. 1985/86) critical, adding, "There is a certain amount of demand for some books. How many editions of Nahı al-balāghah do people need? The market is saturated with these kinds of books. Reading habits in Iran have always been on a low level. It is the publishers' duty to change this situation by reviving scholarly, scientific, cultural and Islamic works that contain new ideas. Unfortunately, very few original works are being published. Additionally, there is an acute problem of paper shortage in 1364."

İraj Safarī of Intishārāt-ı Nūr says people are preoccupied with other problems. "This year was a particularly bad one for book production. People have lost interest in reading. At the beginning of the Revolution one thousand copies of "Usūl-ı Kāfi" were sold by us in less than a month. But now we have not been able to sell even one copy of the same title in several months." Repeating the same subjects is a real problem. Well known authors are presently

engaged in other businesses, while new writers are writing on repetitious themes.

Other booksellers have expressed similar views, blaming the situation on paper shortage, high prices, and reduced interest in books and reading in general. Apparently book peddlers are benefitting from the present situation by searching out old novels and other titles in demand and selling them at steeper prices.

To add salt to injury, in July 1985, the Ministry of Islamic Guidance imposed restrictions on the export of books published in Iran. As reported in the Iran Times of July 19, 1985, those intending to send books abroad had to obtain special authorization. The Ministry had issued a circular limiting the amount of books sent outside Iran by each individual to 10,000 rials worth of publications. This was reportedly in response to an unprecedented outflow of out-of-print and reference materials from Iran.

U.S. research libraries were for a time benefitting from an unrestricted export of publications by booksellers as well as individuals from Iran. The number of acquisition sources was steadily growing in the United States and this, to some extent, had created a price competition and was serving as a stabilizing factor in the Persian book market in this country. Steeper increases in postage costs, higher book prices, further restrictions by the Iranian government on books and periodicals sent outside, plus the developing stagnation of book publishing activities in Iran are certainly not good news for libraries that have been interested in a systematic build-up of their Persian collections. The continuation of the present trend will only result in more time spent on book hunting and in a larger amount of our Middle East collections' book budgets spent on Persian publications.

Note: this is mainly the summary translation of an article carried in the Persian section of Iran Times, December 27, under the title: "Severe stagnation: the fall of Iran's book market".

Abazar Sepehri  
University of Texas, Austin



**KUWAIT ARABIC BOOK FAIR**

The Kuwait Arabic Book Fair has become an important event in the Arab world. Generously subsidized by the Kuwaiti government through the National Council for Culture and Arts, the Fair boasts a great number of major Arab publishers. It is a choice occasion for the professional librarian, book dealer, and reading public to see a large array of Arab publishing. The eleventh Fair, which was open from 27 November to 6 December, 1985, was quite a success. The role of the Kuwaiti government in this was by no means small. Even though participants complained that they had to pay a fee for the display tables, they did not have to pay any of the more substantial expense for rental. The cost of this, of the printing of the sizeable Index to publications available at the Fair, and other expenses amounted to a quarter of a million dinars, a tab picked up by the government. Also, the choice of the site of the Fair was very suitable. A twenty-five minute drive from the central downtown area of Kuwait City, the fair grounds located in Mishref were neither too out of the way to be inconvenient nor so close to the city that a parking problem arose.

The organization of the overall space and the publishers' stalls was fine. The books were displayed in the International Hall, a building spacious enough to accommodate the stalls of the many publishers from all over the Arab world and yet unified enough to save the public from going through security checks more than once. To the right as you entered was an exhibition section running along the greater part of the width of the hall. There the books were arranged by subject. This area offered those who were interested a secluded place where they could review the publications available at the Fair away from the hubbub around the stalls where people were buying. Adjacent to the exhibition area a children's corner was set apart where young readers could look at books displayed for their benefit and amuse themselves with some toys. The remaining, greater space of the hall was occupied by the stalls of the participating publishers. These were arranged by country with large signs hanging from the ceiling to indicate their locations. Within areas allocated to each country separate sections for each participant were provided.

Participants included the large and small publishing houses, Kuwaiti ministries such as those of Culture and Islamic Affairs, universities, and learned organizations and societies including regional ones such as the Arab League

Educational, Cultural & Scientific Organization and the Arab Planning Institute. These were among the most interesting stalls.

I also stopped at the National Council for Culture and Arts where they were displaying titles of their Heritage Series which comprises editions of the classical Arabic works. The University of Kuwait, I found, had put out a number of new titles in such fields as language and literature, law, and history. I also spent some time looking at the more recent publications of Majallat Dirasat al-Khalij wa-al-Jazirah al-Arabiyyah and those of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Of the private trade publishers, Dhat al-Salasil was amongst the five most popular publishers, if not in fact the most popular one, with the greatest number of titles on its publication list. Aghani wa-funun al-bahr fi al-Kuwayt wa-al-Khalij al-‘Arabi, by Hissah al-Rifa‘i; Tarikh al-hadarah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah, by Sa‘id ‘Abd al-Fattah Ashur and others; and al-Jughrafiyyah al-tarikhiiyyah lil-Kuwayt, by Muhammad Rashid al-Fil are samples of their 1985 publications. Similar to other participants, they were acting as the agent for one Lebanese publisher. There the scene was quite lively with the general manager of the House, Mr. Abdallah al-Mansour, present much of the time and assisting his employees in selling to the general public when not busy making wholesale deals and arrangements with book dealers from this or that country. Other major publishers present and active were Rubay‘an, Kazmah, Press Agency, Mu‘assasat al-Sabbah, and Dar al-‘Urubah.

A large public was also attracted to the Fair. The evening hours (4-8) on were much more crowded than the morning hours (9-12). Pupils on school trips were also a pleasing common daily sight. A discount of 25% on all prices probably prompted a lot of buying. Increasing the number of the ten or so shopping carts - made available to the general public for carrying their purchases - would have given flesh to the bones of a very practical idea especially useful to voracious private buyers as well as to people like myself buying in quantities for institutions. The Fair also attracted librarians from Arab universities and learned organizations who came to acquire for their libraries.

On Wednesday the fourth of December, there was an open seminar where publishers and others discussed issues related to the Fair and voiced their suggestions and complaints. Altogether the atmosphere at the Fair was congenial for publishers and dealers to meet, do business and arrange for wholesale importation/exportation of books.

Karim Y. Gohar  
Library of Congress, Cairo

## BOOK REVIEWS

Islam: the Religious and Political Life of a World Community.  
 Edited by Marjorie Kelly. New York: Praeger, 1984. ix, 321 p.  
 Published for the Foreign Policy Association.  
 \$16.95 paperback  
 \$39.95 hardcover

This book of fourteen essays was intended to "complement an Introduction to Islamic Civilization course produced by the Foreign Policy Association in cooperation with National Public Radio and the University of Texas at Austin". The book is both an overview of the history of Islam as religion, culture and political force, and an investigation of the characteristics of Islam. Each of the fourteen chapters discusses a separate topic, whether a period of history or an aspect of Islam as religion or culture. There is a certain amount of overlap and of cross-referencing among chapters. The chapters are: Faith and Practice; the Message and the Messenger; the Foundations of State and Society; the Early Muslim Empires: Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids; Islamic Universalism in the Later Middle Ages; the Later Muslim Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals; the Colonial Period; Muslim Response to Colonialism; Muslim Nation-States; Muslim Societies Today; Islamic Law; the Changing Arab Muslim Family; Muslims in the United States; Present Tendencies, Future Trends. The authors are big guns, among them Fazlur Rahman, Roy Mottahedeh, Francis Peters, Arthur Goldschmidt, John Voll, John Esposito, Ann Elizabeth Mayer, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

There are no explanatory references or footnotes, save one early on explaining why C.E. is used in dates rather than A.D. There is a map of the Muslim empires of the 17th century and of the present-day Islamic world, or more precisely, since there is a chapter on Muslims in the United States, the Islamic Eastern hemisphere. Arthur Goldschmidt's chapter on the colonial period has an interesting and useful table of 'Predominantly Muslim States', giving the countries' former name(s), current population, Muslim percentage of population, and a capsule history of colonial rule. Marjorie Kelly's chapter on Muslim nation-states has a short table of 'socio-economic indices' for seven Arab states. There is a glossary at the end, intended for the general reader, who will not quibble at the definition of abd as 'servant' or of marabouts as 'saints'. There is a selected bibliography of

English-language publications. This is followed by a list of outreach centers, teaching aids, Islamic centers in the U.S., and a brief list of 'Distributors of Islamic materials and Third World literature in translation'.

The book is concluded by an index which can be most charitably described as silly. There are multiple entries for the same people, under different names or different forms of the same name. Compound names are entered rather strangely, e.g. Baz, Shaykh ibn; al-Din Bitar, Salah; al-Karim Qasim, Abd; al-Khattab, Umar ibn; Nuwas, Dhu; Saud, Abd al-Aziz ibn. Other names are entered under the first element. The book is further marred by misspellings and other instances of the sloppy editing that publishers foist on the public these days. Mentioning an incompetent index and numerous mistakes in spelling is not a matter of fussing over insignificant trifles. This is a book intended for the general reader, who can easily be led astray in the quest for more information by a misspelled name. Those who would wish to search the index to see if the book includes references to specific people, places, events, etc., may be impeded by the idiosyncratic forms of entry used in this book, unless they know enough to search under variant or 'illegal' forms of the name. The least a reputable publisher of scholarly books can do for the purchaser of a \$16.95 paperback or a \$39.95 hardback, or as a matter of courtesy to its authors, is edit the thing properly.

As for somewhat more substantive analysis, I regret having missed the National Public Radio series which this book was designed to complement. Having read through the book, I cannot help but wonder if what I found difficult or obscure in it was made clear in the radio series, or if in listening to the series one might better understand much that is said in the book. Not that the book is in and of itself so very difficult. But this is a book more of interpretation than of fact, especially in the earlier chapters. I found that it got better, so to speak, was more accessible, made more sense, was easier to understand, the more I read of it, the further I got into those chapters which are more factual and less interpretive. But some of the chapters, and I am thinking in particular of Peters on the early Muslim empires (chapter 4), approach their subject from so Olympian a perspective that it is hard to see what they are focusing on. In other chapters the discussion is rather oblique; rather than a simple statement followed by detailed discussion, there is detailed discussion in which are imbedded bits and pieces of the simple statement. The clearest and best of the chapters are those on the Muslim empires, colonialism, Islamic law and the Muslims in the United States. There is less opportunity in

them for the authors to compress centuries of history or thought into a sentence or two, and to make grand, sweeping pronouncements. University and research libraries will acquire this book, as they do virtually every book that comes along in Middle East studies. I would be surprised, however, to find this book heavily used, especially by the general readers for whom it is intended.

Edward Jajko  
Hoover Institution.

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