

45 Annual Conference | 45 colloque annuel

Hybrid Conference
London, May 14-17, 2024

Special thanks to our sponsors:

Muteferriqa



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الرواد في قواعد المعلومات العربية


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The Institute of Ismaili Studies



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

(International) in the United Kingdom

Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

AGA KHAN LIBRARY

LONDON

The Aga Khan Library emerged from a collaboration between The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) and The Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC). The concept took shape in 2008 when these two institutes relocated to a shared building in central London.

Initially, each institute maintained separate libraries. However, in 2014, they decided to merge their services and combine their invaluable collections related to Islamic studies. This newly integrated library was informally referred to as the Joint IIS-ISMC Library.

In 2018, the joint library officially opened its doors to the public as the Aga Khan Library, situated within the newly constructed Aga Khan Centre. Boasting over 54,000 volumes and cutting-edge facilities, the library serves the academic community by providing comprehensive resources for researching diverse topics in Islamic studies.

The Aga Khan Library houses Europe's largest collection dedicated to the study of Ismaili communities, their historical context, and their beliefs. Additionally, it offers an extensive array of materials on Shia Islam, Quranic literature, and other fundamental aspects of Islamic studies. These collections are invaluable for understanding the past and present development of Muslim civilizations, cultural production, and the global situation of Muslim diasporas.



MELCom, the Middle Eastern Libraries Committee, was established in the United Kingdom in the late 1960s to promote all aspects of Middle Eastern librarianship, book collecting, the book trade and publishing.

Through international connections, MELCom held its inaugural joint conference with French colleagues in Aix-en-Provence, France, in 1979—a milestone that paved the way for subsequent gatherings. Following a second conference outside the UK at Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin in 1981, the feasibility and benefits of organising an annual international conference became evident.

MELCom fostered a robust exchange of ideas related to librarianship and book research within a welcoming and professional atmosphere, complemented by informal activities and scholarly exploration. The diverse scope of MELCom International's activities eventually led to its independent operation alongside MELCom UK.

Since 1993, MELCom International has been operating independently of MELCOM UK, maintaining its own Constitution to provide a legal framework for its endeavours.

Day 1 - Morning

Tuesday 14th May - Atrium Conference Room, Aga Khan Centre

09:00 - 10:00 Registration and Refreshments

Opening and Welcome

- **Walid Ghali**, Head Librarian, Aga Khan Library
 - 10:00 - 10:30** - **Zayn Kassam**, Director, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
 - **Andreas Drechsler**, President, MELCom International
-

Session 1: Insights from UK Libraries (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Lydia Wright**

1. *Arabic Collections in the British Library at 50: Reviewing Change and Looking to the Future*
Debbie Cox, Lead Curator, Contemporary British & Irish Publications, British Library, UK
- 10:30 - 12:00** 2. *Archiving the Archive: Integrating the Der-Khachadourian Library into the British Library*
Michael Erdman, Head of Middle East and Central Asia Department, British Library, UK
3. *The Collection of Kuwait Library at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies*
Wassilena Sekulova, Librarian, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Oxford, UK

Sponsor Presentation 1

12:00 - 12:30 *Muteferriqa: Ottoman and Turkish Studies Discovery Portal*
Ceyhan Ozan, Muteferriqa Product Manager, Miletos INC

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch Break - sponsored by **Muteferriqa**

Day 1 - Afternoon

Tuesday 14th May - Atrium Conference Room, Aga Khan Centre

Session 2: Preservation (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Wassilena Sekulova**

- 13:30 - 15:00**
1. *Himaya: Qatar National Library's Programme to Combat Trafficking of Documentary Heritage in the MENA Region*
Huism Tan, Executive Director, Qatar National Library, Qatar
 2. *The Possession System and its Impact on Combating Illicit Trafficking of Documentary Heritage in Iraq* **Online**
Ahmed Kareem Alwan, General Director, Iraqi Manuscripts House
 3. *Intersection of Digital Technology and Cultural Heritage Preservation in Algeria*
Abir Chorfa, Program Director, Antiquities Coalition's projects in Algeria

Sponsor Presentation 2

Noor Digital libraries

Ali Sadig, Managing Director, Noorsoft Europe Service

15:00-15:45

Sponsor Presentation 3

Al-Mandumah Arabic Databases

Musaed Altayyar, Executive Manager, Dar al-Mandumah

15:45 - 16:15 Refreshments - sponsored by **Dar al-Mandumah**

16:15 - 17:30 Aga Khan Library and AKC Gardens Tour

17:30 - 19:00 Canape Reception - sponsored by **Aga Khan Library**

Day 2 - Parallel Sessions. Stream A - Morning

Wednesday 15th May – Atrium Conference Room, Aga Khan Centre

09:30 - 10:00 Refreshments

Session 3A: History of Libraries (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Arnoud Vrolijk**

- 10:00 - 11:00
1. *On the Last Train to Istanbul: the Fate of Jewish Librarians at the Berlin State Library during the Nazi Era*
Christoph Rauch, Head of Oriental Department,
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Germany
 2. *The National Library of Baghdad - a Symbol of National and Cultural Identity: an Outsider Perspective*
Hans-Peter Pökel, Head Librarian, German Orient Institute
Beirut, Lebanon
-

11:00 - 11:30 Refreshments

Session 4A: Rare Books (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Christoph Rauch**

- 11:30 - 13:00
1. *Illustrated Persian Lithographs - Managing a Researcher's Legacy*
Mirja Weinmann, Librarian for Turkic Languages and Persian, Bavarian State Library, Germany
 2. *Boğaziçi University Library Rare Books Collection: from Past to Present* **Online**
Sevgi Atila Cünüş, Rare Books and Historical Archives Librarian, Boğaziçi University, Türkiye
 3. *Arabic Books Printed in the 18th Century in Moldavia, Wallachia, and Greater Syria. New Research Outcomes*
Ioana Feodorov, Principal Investigator, ERC TYPARABIC Project, Institute for South-East European Studies, Romanian Academy, Romania
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13:00 - 14:00 Lunch Break

Day 2 - Parallel Sessions. Stream A - Afternoon

Wednesday 15th May - Atrium Conference Room, Aga Khan Centre

Session 5A: Outreach and Collection Interpretation (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Waseem Farooq**

1. *Learnings from the Muslims in Canada: Archives and Their Relevance on the Study of Islam*

Aly Rattansi, Archivist/Librarian, Muslims in Canada Archives, University of Toronto, Canada

14:00 - 15:30

2. *So You Want to Be a Librarian? On Slaying Ghouls and Beating the Odds*

Tine Lavent, Head Librarian, Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, Egypt

3. *Towards Reparative Collecting & Digitization: A Community Symposium and Training Program*

Dale Correa, Middle Eastern Studies Librarian & History Coordinator, University of Texas at Austin, USA

15:30 - 16:00 Refreshments - sponsored by **Muteferriga**

Atrium Conference Room (1st floor)

Sponsor Presentation 4

New and Featured Resources and Services for Middle East Studies

Ariane Rückebeil, Account Manager Europe, East View Inc

16:00 - 16:45

Sponsor Presentation 5

Discover Al Manhal, the Leading Platform for Islamic and Middle East Studies

Rany Al Baghdadi, Chief Revenue & Strategy Officer, Kezana

16:45 - 17:00 Refreshments

17:00 - 18:00 Aga Khan Library and AKC Gardens Tour

Day 2 - Parallel Sessions. Stream B - Morning
Wednesday 15th May - **Room 220** (2nd floor) Aga Khan Centre

09:30 - 10:00 Refreshments

Session 3B: Introducing Library Collections (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Shah Hussain**

- 10:00 - 11:00**
1. *Middle Eastern Library in Leiden*
Anita Keizers and **Mariëtte Keuken**, Subject Librarians,
Leiden University Libraries, the Netherlands
 2. *The Bibliotheca Afghanica Collection at the Basel University Library*
Joël Laszlo, Liaison Librarian, University Library, University
Basel, Switzerland
-

11:00 - 11:30 Refreshments

Session 4B: Manuscripts (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Anne-Sylvie Cathelineau**

- 11:30 - 13:00**
1. *Masterpieces of Persian Calligraphy in British Library Manuscripts [Online](#)*
Muhammad Isa Waley, Retired Curator for Persian and
Turkish, British Library, UK
 2. *The Collection of Oriental Manuscripts of the University of Naples L'Orientale: State of the Art and Current Projects*
Antonella Muratgia, Head Librarian and **Francesca Bellino**,
Professor for Arabic Language and Literature, University of
Naples L'Orientale, Italy
 3. *The Turkish and Bosnian Mevlid Manuscripts and Printed Copies in Arabic, Latin and Cyrillic Scripts and Their Recitations in Bosnian Mevlid Celebrations*
Fatima Kadić, Head Librarian, Faculty of Islamic Studies,
University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
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13:00 - 14:00 Lunch Break

Day 2 - Parallel Sessions. Stream B - Afternoon
Wednesday 15th May - **Room 220** (2nd floor) Aga Khan Centre

Session 5B: Ottoman Legacy (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Michael Erdman**

- 14:00 - 15:30**
1. *The Library of Higher School of Engineering (Mühendis Mekteb-i Âlîsi) in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic (1909-1944)*
U. Duygu Aysal Cin, Lecturer at Istanbul Technical University, Department of Sociology, Türkiye
 2. *Newly Discovered Ottoman Turkish Manuscripts Authored by Famous Ottoman Physicians* **Online**
Ani Avetisyan, Researcher, Matenadaran-Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Armenia
 3. *History of the Manastır Kütüphanesi in Light of Stamps and Records Found in the Oriental Manuscripts of the NUL "St. Clement of Ohrid" in Skopje*
Marijana Kavčić, Senior Librarian in Oriental Collections, National and University Library "St. Clement of Ohrid" - Skopje, North Macedonia
-

15:30 - 16:00 Refreshments - sponsored by **Muteferriqa**

Atrium Conference Room (1st floor)

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16:45 - 17:00 Refreshments

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Day 3 - Morning

Thursday 16th May - Atrium Conference Room, Aga Khan Centre

09:00-09:30 Refreshments

Session 6: Collection Development and Cataloguing (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Walid Ghali**

1. *Developing Qatar National Library Subject Headings (QNLSH): Mechanisms and Challenges*
Iman Weheba, Senior Cataloguing Librarian, Qatar National Library, Qatar

09:30-11:00

2. *The Library of Congress Cairo Overseas Office: Opportunities and Challenges in Cooperative Acquisitions*
Rustin Zarkar, Field Director, Library of Congress, Cairo Overseas Office, Egypt
3. *The Significance of Transliteration in Enhancing Accessibility and Exchange of Arabic Research Data **Online***
Mohamed Elzalabany, Cataloguing Librarian, Library of Congress, Cairo Overseas Office, Egypt

Sponsor Presentation 6

11:00-11:30

Lost in Translation? The Future of Disseminating Scholarship in Arabic, Persian and Other Languages

Nicolette van der Hoek Senior Acquisitions Editor Middle East, Islam and African Studies, De Gruyter Brill

11:30-11:45 Refreshments

Panel discussion: AI in Libraries and Librarians in Digital Humanities

Moderator: **Andreas Dreschsler**

11:45 - 12:45

- **Yasmin Faghihi**, Head of Near and Middle Eastern Department, Cambridge University Library, UK
 - **Magda El-Sherbini**, Professor and Middle East Studies Librarian, The Ohio State University, USA
 - **Huw Jones**, Head of Digital Library, Cambridge University Library, UK
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12:45 - 14:00 Lunch Break

Day 3 - Afternoon

Thursday 16th May - Atrium Conference Room, Aga Khan Centre

Sponsor Presentation 7

14:00 - 14:30

Leila Books: Publishing in the Arab World

George Fawzi, President and managing Director, Leila Books

Session 7: Digital projects (20-minute papers + Q&A)

Moderator: **Susanne Saker**

14:30 - 15:30

1. *Text Reuse and the Library Catalogue*

Peter Verkinderen, Assistant Professor, Centre for Digital Humanities, AKU-ISMC, UK

2. *Persian and Arabic Optical Character Recognition for Open Source: Experiences of the FID Nahost, Halle (Saale)*

Maida Farooq Buttar, Employee of FID Nahost, The University and State Library of Saxony-Anhalt, Germany

15:30 - 15:45 Refreshments

15:45 - 16:45

1. *Project of the electronic publication of the al-Tantawi collection at SPbU: experience, results, and perspectives*

Online

Olga Yastrebova and team, Senior Researcher, National Library of Russia

2. *Arabic Manuscripts Digital Access Project of Istanbul Üniversitesi Rare Works Library*

Cihan Kalın, E-Resource Librarian, Istanbul University Central Library, Türkiye

16:45 - 17:00 Refreshments

MELCom Business Meeting

Andreas Drechsler

17:00 - 18:00

- Concluding remarks and Board's reports
- MI Conference 2025
- Election: Treasurer

45th MELCom Conference Activities

Please remember that all these activities are prebooked and must have been paid separately from the MELCom Conference attendance fees.

Wednesday 15th May – MELCom dinner

We will be enjoying an exciting array of Yemeni delicacies in this excellent restaurant: **Queen of Sheba***, 3-4 Bouverie PI, W2 1RE

18:45 Meeting at Queen of Sheba

19:00 Dinner

*Please be aware that there are other restaurants with similar names in London.

Friday 17th May – Excursion

Kew Gardens and Thames River cruise

08:30 Meeting outside the Aga Khan Centre

09:00 Coach departure

10:00 Arrival at Kew Gardens

10:45 Tour of Kew Gardens (60 minutes)

16:00 Meeting at the Kew Gardens Pier

16:30 Boat departure

18:00 Arrival at Westminster Pier

Sponsor and Vendor Information



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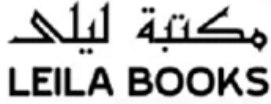
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