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The Middle Eastern Collections of the Harvard Library

Labib Zuwiyya Yamak

ALTHOUGH systematic acquisition of Middle Eastern materials did not begin at Harvard until after the establishment of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in 1954, interest in Arabic and, one can say, in Arabica, goes back to the early years of the University's history. During the presidency (1654–1672) of Charles Chauncey, Arabic was added to the three Semitic languages — Syriac, Chaldaic, and Hebrew — that had been taught since 1643.[1] During the two centuries following his administration, some instruction in Arabic may have been available from time to time in Harvard College, but no course in Arabic appears to have been listed in the *Catalogue* of the University until the Semitic Department was organized under the chairmanship of Professor Crawford H. Toy in 1880. It is known that several American colleges and universities introduced Semitics into their curricula during the eighteenth century; by 1896 it could be reported that Arabic was being taught at Bryn Mawr, Chicago, Cincinnati, Columbia, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, Minnesota, New York University, Pennsylvania, Princeton, the Union Theological Seminary in New York, and Vanderbilt, as well as at Harvard.[2]

The teaching of Arabic at these institutions was not, however, an end in itself. Arabic was taught as an adjunct to Hebrew; it was used chiefly for philological purposes, and the emphasis was on biblical studies in general. This situation continued well into the first decade of the present century. Soon after the end of the First World War, Arabic started to come into its own in the American university curriculum. The founding of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago in 1919 is a landmark in the development of Near Eastern studies as a major subject of teaching and research.[3] In 1934 the University of

[1] William Rosenau, *Semitic Studies in American Colleges* (Chicago, 1896), pp. 7–8.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 9–15.

[3] James H. Breasted, *The Oriental Institute* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 421–426.

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Michigan established a chair of Islamic Art, the first of its kind in the history of American education. Two years later the James Richard Jewett Professorship of Arabic was endowed at Harvard, the first chair in this subject to be established in an American university.

Growing interest in Arabic and Islamic studies during the 1930's is indicated by a series of summer seminars in Near Eastern studies sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies; these met at Princeton in 1935, 1938, and 1941.[4] Still, the growth cannot be described as rapid, and the appeal of Arabic studies was distinctly limited. Few universities had vigorous graduate or advanced programs in Arabic or Islamic studies. "Advanced Arabic," it was reported in 1951, "is taught at two institutions [Pennsylvania and Princeton] and five others [Chicago, Columbia, Dropsie, Johns Hopkins, and Harvard] give some courses. Advanced Turkish is taught at two institutions [Georgetown and Princeton] and one other [Harvard] offers courses. Some Persian is taught at five institutions [Chicago, Dropsie, Harvard, Pennsylvania, and Princeton]." [5]

A major change followed the enactment in 1958 of the National Defense Education Act, which had as its objective the stimulation of interest in the study of foreign languages. The result has been a strengthening of instruction in Arabic, and the introduction of other Middle Eastern languages into the curricula. The teaching of Persian and Turkish led eventually to a fairly large number of offerings in Persian and Turkish studies, which are now becoming well established though they continue to play second fiddle to Arabic studies.

The growth of area study programs is of great significance. Two decades ago the field was practically barren. "The Near East," Robert B. Hall wrote in 1947, "is completely neglected and there are few scholars in this country who know anything about the area." [6] Sixteen years later a similar survey reported that there were seventeen area study programs on the Middle East,[7] and today there are between twenty-five and thirty.

[4] American Council of Learned Societies, *Bulletin*, XXV (July 1936), 678. See also James Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder, eds., *The World of Islam, Studies in Honour of Philip K. Hitti* (London, 1960), p. 2.

[5] Wendell C. Bennett, *Area Studies in American Universities* (New York, 1951), p. 24.

[6] Robert B. Hall, *Area Studies: With Special Reference to Their Implications for Research in the Social Sciences* (New York, 1947), p. 84.

[7] Philip J. McNiff, "Foreign Area Studies and Their Effects on Library Development," *College & Research Libraries*, XXIV (July 1963), 293.

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The rapid development of these centers undoubtedly reflects growing recognition of the need for more extensive and detailed study of the history and civilization of the Middle East. Several factors, of course, have contributed to making the Middle East an important — and fashionable — area of study, not the least of which has been the new role of the United States as a world power. If commercial and industrial interests have been responsible in part for the growth of these centers, undoubtedly there is also interest of a more scholarly and humanistic nature, which may well prove to be more enduring, supported by increased assistance from foundations and from the government since the early 1950's.

The effect of these centers on the development of Middle Eastern library resources has been tremendous. The centers have caused libraries in their institutions to establish collections or build up existing holdings in this field, and have also brought about major changes in the organization and control of these materials. It should not be supposed, however, that acquisition efforts prior to this surge of the 1950's were of little or no consequence. On the contrary, much of the core of the Middle Eastern collections in this country, notably in Arabic, was acquired at the turn of the century or even earlier. The second half of the nineteenth century brought an appreciable increase in the Arabic holdings of American libraries. The Astor Collection, which became the nucleus of the New York Public Library, contained more than seventy Arabic titles.[8] In 1870, Professor Edward E. Salisbury presented his entire Arabic collection to the Yale University Library.[9] Toward the end of the century the Hartford Seminary Foundation, through the assistance of Professor Duncan B. Macdonald, acquired the collection of August Müller of Königsberg.[10]

The most notable single acquisition of more recent years came in 1942, when Princeton acquired the Yahuda Collection of Arabic manuscripts, consisting of more than six thousand manuscripts in all fields of knowledge.[11] Three years later the Library of Congress obtained the

[8] Astor Library (New York), *Catalogue of Books in the Astor Library Relating to the Languages and Literature of Asia, Africa, and the Oceanic Islands* (New York, 1854), p. ii.

[9] Yale University Library, *Arabic Manuscripts in the Yale University Library*, compiled by Leon Nemoy (New Haven, 1956), p. 5. (*Transactions* of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XL.)

[10] Duncan B. Macdonald, "The Müller Semitic Library," *The Hartford Seminary Record*, IV: 3 (February 1894), 174–179.

[11] Philip Hitti, "The Arabic and Islamic Manuscripts," *Princeton University*

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great collection of Shaykh al-Mansuri of the Azhar University in Cairo, which is reported to consist of some five thousand volumes dealing chiefly with Islam and with the Quran, Hadith, and their respective sciences.[12] These examples demonstrate that the Middle East was not completely neglected by major research libraries prior to the coming of age of the area study programs; even so, they are overshadowed by the phenomenal growth of more recent years. A survey in 1942 found notable Arabic collections only at Princeton, Stanford, and Yale (in that order),[13] while by 1954 it could be reported that twenty five libraries belonging to the Association of Research Libraries had sizable collections of Arabic materials. At that time the five institutions having the most extensive Arabic holdings were said to be the Library of Congress with 11,000 volumes, the New York Public Library with 5,000, Harvard with 3,496, Princeton with 2,398, and the Hoover Library at Stanford with 2,000.[14] Current Arabic publications have been acquired by American research libraries at an unprecedented rate since 1962, when the "P. L. 480 Program" went into effect for the United Arab Republic. This is a program, authorized by an amendment to Public Law 480 of 1954, under which foreign currencies derived from the sale of surplus agricultural commodities abroad are used for the purchase, servicing, and distribution to American libraries of foreign books, periodicals, and related materials; it is administered by the Library of Congress.

If Arabic has been emphasized in the foregoing account rather than Persian or Turkish, it is because the major early acquisitions were Arabic and the preponderance of material currently received from the Middle East is in that language. Persian and Turkish publications have been systematically acquired during the past two decades, however, and holdings in these languages are now substantial. Large private collections, acquired during the mid-1950's through the efforts of energetic and dedicated faculty members and area specialists, became the

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Chronicle, 3 (June 1942), 116–122 — Quoted in M. M. al-Hadi, *Arabic Library Resources in the United States* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Urbana, Ill., 1964), p. 41.

[12] H. W. Glidden, "Orientalia: Near East," Library of Congress, *Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, III (February 1946), 37.

[13] R. B. Downs, "Leading American Library Collections," *Library Quarterly*, XII (1942), 457–473.

[14] Lucille M. Morsh, *Survey of Volumes in ARL Libraries in the Languages of South-East Asia and the Middle East, Report to ARL Members, June 11, 1954* — Cited in M. M. al-Hadi, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

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nucleus around which Persian and Turkish collections have grown. At Harvard, Professor Stanford J. Shaw acquired much of the present Ottoman Turkish collection. For Persian, the Harvard Library owes a great deal to the initial contribution of Professor Richard Frye and to the guidance of Iran's foremost bibliographer, Iraj Afshar.

The records of the Harvard Library do not show how many Arabic, Persian, and Turkish books were in the collections by the turn of the century or how active an acquisitions program there was. As has been noted, the Department of Semitic Languages was organized in 1880 by Professor Crawford H. Toy, who taught Arabic as well as Hebrew and Aramaic. In 1891 the Department was reorganized as the Division of Semitic Languages and History. The change appears to have been substantive rather than merely organizational and procedural; it implied a new commitment on the part of the University toward the larger field of Oriental studies. In the long run, at least, this could not fail to have a far reaching influence on the growth of the Library's Middle Eastern collections.

In 1961 a new reorganization changed the Division of Semitic Languages and History into the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures. As now constituted, the Department is concerned with teaching and research on the languages, literatures, and history of the Near Eastern peoples from the earliest times to the present.

The history of Harvard's collections in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish may be described as having gone through three distinct stages of growth during the past eighty-eight years — stages closely related to those traversed by the Department that is chiefly interested in these collections. From the founding of the Department of Semitic Languages until 1891 there was little interest in building up resources in Arabic, which was not regarded as a useful subject in itself or even as a necessary tool for research in Near Eastern history and archaeology. Naturally, therefore, neither the Library nor the Department of Semitic Languages thought it necessary to develop a systematic acquisitions program for Arabic. The few volumes acquired during that period were gifts for the most part, and Persian and Turkish, for all practical purposes, were completely neglected.

The second stage extends from the reorganization of the Semitic Department in 1891 until 1954, when the Center for Middle Eastern Studies was established. Both dates are important landmarks. The reorganization of 1891 resulted eventually in the freeing of Arabic from

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its subordination as an adjunct to other Semitic languages. Since the early decades of this century, consequently, Arabic has been taught at Harvard for the express purpose of enabling students to gain a deeper insight into Arabic studies in general, including Arabic history and literature. Though the traditional approach to the study of Near Eastern history and culture continued, new areas of research and scholarship were opening up which required a more rigorous study of the language. In 1911, for the first time in its history, Harvard had a Professor of Arabic in the person of James R. Jewett, who contributed a great deal to the building of the Arabic collection during his more than twenty years on the Faculty.

The collection is now in a period of development that began in 1954 with the advent of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and the appointment of Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb to the Jewett Professorship of Arabic. Notable changes in the acquisitions program and in the processing of Arabic materials have marked this period. Through the efforts of Professor Gibb the Library acquired an Arabic collection of some three thousand volumes. As the cataloguing facilities then available were inadequate to process these materials, a new position was established in the Catalogue Department, with the result that, in 1956, the Library had its first full-time Arabic cataloguer, who also advised on book selection.

As teaching and research activities of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies expanded, the Library sought to meet the demand for research materials in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. The position of Middle Eastern Specialist was created in the Catalogue Department in 1959; three years later, the Middle Eastern Division was organized and the new position of Assistant Librarian for the Middle Eastern Collections was established for its administrative chief.

As a significant part of the Harvard College Library, the Arabic collection is of recent origin, though the records appear to indicate that there were at least twenty Arabic titles by 1830.[15] According to a count of the Library in 1949, the total Arabic collection then consisted of 1,984 volumes. This seems to have been the first time that a separate figure for Arabic holdings was given in a general inventory, which may indicate that the collection was growing in importance at that date. Earlier figures were reported only for the entire *OL* classification,

[15] Harvard University Library, *A Catalogue of the Library of Harvard University* (Cambridge, 1830).

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which is not restricted to Arabic, but also includes works in Persian, Turkish, Armenian, Georgian, and a score of Indo-Iranian and Turco-Tataric languages, as well as works in western languages dealing with oriental literature. In the absence of exact data on Arabic holdings before 1949, estimates of growth can be based only on a comparison of the total count of the *OL* classification in 1934, when it numbered 4,270 volumes,[16] with the total for 1949, which was 5,876. In fifteen years, then, only 1,606 volumes had been added to all of *OL*, and it is probable that few of these were in Arabic. For the entire span of 120 years between 1830 and 1949, when the last official count was made, the increase from 20 to 1,984 volumes would come to an average of only 16½ per year.

By 1954 it is estimated that Arabic holdings numbered approximately 2,500. The tremendous increase since that date stands out in sharp contrast against the earlier background of slow development. When Miss Flora Rizk joined the staff of the Catalogue Department in September 1956, she was given responsibility for cataloguing materials in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. By June 1957 the entire backlog of Arabic had been catalogued.[17] A year later, however, it was reported that "there is on hand the private collection recently purchased by the Middle East Center (1,500 volumes), 100 volumes of which have been put through."[18] Though no figures were reported, it is safe to assume that by the end of the fiscal year 1957/58 the Arabic collection in Widener had passed the 4,000-volume mark and thus, within four years after the establishment of the Center, had nearly doubled in size. During the next ten years it was to grow by more than 700%; its present size is slightly more than 30,000 volumes. The Persian collection is now estimated at 5,500 volumes, and the Ottoman Turkish collection, with 4,000, is as large as Arabic was a decade ago.

Size alone, it should be added, is not a sound criterion for evaluating the strength of a research collection. Comparisons may be misleading unless precise definitions of scope have established what is included. It is safe to say, however, that the Middle Eastern collections in the Harvard University Library are among the largest in the country, that

[16] Alfred C. Potter, *The Library of Harvard University, Descriptive and Historical Notes*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, 1934), p. 46.

[17] Harvard University Library, Catalogue Department, *Annual Report*, 1956/57, 12.

[18] *Ibid.*, 1957/58, 9.

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they are among the best organized of collections in their area, and that they are well balanced, covering the wide spectrum of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies from classical antiquity (i.e., the pre-Islamic period) to the present. All the basic source materials in history, literature, philosophy, and religion are represented by one or more editions. The works of great authors such as al-Ghazzali (1058–1111), Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), Ibn Sina (980[?]–1037), al-Farabi (d. 950), Ibn Taymiyyah (1262–1328), and al-Suyuti (1445–1505), to mention only a few, fill several shelves in the stacks. The collections are equally rich in material on the Quran and the Quranic sciences, on Hadith and Hadith sciences, on Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), on Kalam (Islamic theology), and on Islamic sects. They are strong in language and literature. Classical works on Arabic grammar abound, as well as classical and modern dictionaries. Every poet of note, from the pre-Islamic period down to the eighteenth century, is represented by at least one critical edition. Both the Arabic and the Persian collections are particularly rich in belles lettres, and both include extensive periodical holdings.

The indebtedness of the Arabic collection to the guidance of Professor Jewett has already been mentioned, and a comparable debt to his successor, Professor William Thomson, should be acknowledged. Their interest in Arabic studies prompted a sustained effort to enrich the collections, and most of the classical works — notably the prestigious editions of the Bulaq Press in Cairo and many western critical editions — were acquired during their tenure. Their contribution was all the more important because the Library then had no Arabic bibliographer and no Arabic cataloguer. Professors Jewett and Thomson built the basic core around which the present collection has grown.

It must also be remembered that during their time research in Arabic studies was heavily oriented toward the classical period, and the collection naturally reflected that approach. Modern works, particularly in literature and the social sciences, were relatively neglected, and Arabic periodicals were practically non-existent. This situation continued until 1954 when, as a direct result of the establishment of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, a completely new approach to the acquisition of Arabic materials was developed. From that date forward the Library has been committed to building a strong and viable research collection. This resulted in the appointment of a full-time Arabic cataloguer in 1956 and then in the establishment of the Middle Eastern

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Division in 1962; it has also entailed the financial support for acquisitions that has made possible the remarkable growth of the collection during the past decade.

This growth has been in depth as well as horizontally. More than two thousand volumes relating to the modern period were acquired during 1956 alone. Increased attention to periodicals began with substantial additions to the list of current subscriptions, and soon led to the acquisition of many back files. Between 1959 and 1962 it was possible to purchase complete sets of a number of significant Arabic periodicals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, among them *al-Muqtataf* (1876–1951), *al-Jinan* (1870–1885), *al-Diya'* (1898–1906), *al-Hilal* (1892 to date), *al-Mashriq* (1898 to date), and *al-Irfan* (1909 to date). Today the total number of Arabic periodicals in the Library is well over 350, most of which are current.

The Library has sought since 1956 to cover new publications of research value without neglecting opportunities to acquire earlier works that ought to be in its collection, and it has been successful in both efforts. Many of the gaps in the classical portion of the collection are being filled in. For recent publications, great assistance has come from the "P. L. 480 Program," which has already been mentioned; this has brought to the Library everything of research value — in so far as agents of the Library of Congress have been able to obtain "everything" — that has been published in the United Arab Republic since January 1962. In 1962 and again in 1964 the Assistant Librarian for the Middle Eastern Collections went on buying expeditions to North Africa and the Middle East. Each of these trips, in addition to the volumes that it brought to the collection immediately, helped to establish closer relations with booksellers, publishers, government agencies, libraries, and academic institutions; there is no substitute for such relations in an area where the international book trade is relatively undeveloped.

The history of the Middle Eastern catalogues, like the history of the collection itself, has been marked by periods of neglect as well as of rapid progress. The special Arabic catalogue was established during the academic year 1914/15 under the supervision of Dr. O. H. Gates of the Andover Theological Seminary Library. From the beginning the Library displayed great foresight in dealing with the problem of transliteration. Instead of following what might have seemed to be the normal and natural approach to cataloguing works in non-Roman

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alphabets, the Library decided not to transliterate but to catalogue Arabic books in Arabic and to develop a separate Arabic catalogue. The Persian and Ottoman Turkish catalogues were later developed on the same basis. Thus, instead of forcing the scholar to transliterate author and title in order to locate an Arabic book in the Roman-alphabet Public Catalogue, the Library has provided a separate file which is much easier to consult.

According to the *Annual Report* of the Catalogue Department for 1914/15, "Dr. Gates undertook to prepare the Arabic catalogue in connection with his reclassification of the books, and he employed to help him a Syrian student, Mr. Dumit." There is a short note concerning the reference cards for Arabic authors in the *Annual Report* for 1916/17, but, aside from this, the reports say nothing of the Arabic catalogue or the Arabic collection until 1927. Silence evidently reflected inactivity, for the *Annual Report* of 1927/28 describes the Arabic trays as "neglected children" that "have in consequence suffered for lack of care and have long needed combing and dressing up." During this long period of neglect there accumulated a large number of notes regarding matters that needed attention before the catalogue could be made more useful. Help was solicited from Professor Jewett and the report for 1927/28 notes that he "contributed one hundred dollars to attend to this messy cleaning-up job."

The first cataloguer to be put in charge of the Arabic catalogue after Dr. Gates was Miss Jessie M. Whitehead, who equipped herself for the task by studying Arabic with Professor Thomson. By December 1926 she "had sufficient acquaintance with the simpler grammatical forms of literary Arabic to make it worth while to attack the accumulated reserve of books, pamphlets, and manuscripts in which the Arabic script was employed."[19] Professors Jewett and Thomson were helpful in identifying difficult items and obscure authors.

The Catalogue Department reports say nothing about Middle Eastern cataloguing from 1928 to 1938; in the *Annual Report* for 1938/39, however, Miss Whitehead wrote, "Professor Thomson brought up in April the question of Arabic names. . . . Briefly, the selection of the portion of the name under which the author is filed has been done through the years on a very disparate policy, far too few references have been made, and names have been shortened unmercifully at one time."[20] In order to reduce the confusion resulting from

[19] *Ibid.*, 1926/27, 19.
[20] *Ibid.*, 1938/39, [Appendix].

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this, it was decided that the Arabic catalogue should be revised as soon as possible, but Miss Whitehead was still complaining two years later that "the Arabic names in our catalogue remain a spot needing lengthy revision." [21]

Another period of silence in the *Annual Reports* continued until 1946/47, when David Dorman was employed to assist Miss Whitehead with Arabic Cataloguing. By June 1948, it was reported, all uncatalogued material had been processed. Nothing more is recorded until September 1956 when Miss Flora Rizk joined the staff as Arabic cataloguer; thereafter, each annual and statistical report has contained information on the progress of Arabic cataloguing.

In retrospect, then, during the first forty years of the Arabic catalogue a beginning was made, but the intervals of activity were much shorter than the periods of relative neglect. This should not be surprising in view of the history of the collection itself and of teaching and research in Arabic at Harvard during this period. Obviously there was little emphasis on what may be called formal or full cataloguing. Entries often were not uniform and the names of classical authors invariably were shortened. There were very few added entries, particularly for titles, and, except for a few personal-name headings, there were no subject cards. In short, the Arabic catalogue was simply a finding list rather than a bibliographical tool, and, since the Library stacks were open to students, it can be assumed that little use was made of it. It should be added that, for all practical purposes, the Persian and Ottoman Turkish catalogues did not exist before the establishment of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in 1954.

Shortcomings remain in spite of the progress that has been made since 1956, when the position of Arabic cataloguer was established; but the Middle Eastern catalogues of the Harvard University Library may now be described as the leading catalogues of their kind in the United States. The wisdom of the basic original decision to maintain separate catalogues rather than to transliterate has repeatedly been vindicated. In 1956 the Arabic catalogue contained fewer than 3,000 cards; it is now estimated to contain more than 40,000 author and title cards. While a great majority of the cards are typewritten, a few manuscript cards survive. The Persian catalogue numbers more than 12,000 cards, and the Ottoman Turkish more than 4,000. In addition, a fourth file, containing subject cards with English-language headings, contains at least 13,000 cards. Each of the three language catalogues — Arabic,

[21] *Ibid.*, 1940/41, 202.

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Persian, and Ottoman Turkish — is in dictionary form, with cards for authors, titles, and personal-name subject headings interfiled. The subject catalogue with English-language headings, which was established in March 1961, has grown at a phenomenal rate, and has been warmly welcomed by scholars. It includes subject cards for all works in Arabic, Persian, or Ottoman Turkish that have been catalogued, recatalogued, or reclassified since its establishment.

The Middle Eastern catalogues are not restricted to holdings of Widener Library, but include cards for Arabic works in the Law School Library, the Countway Library of Medicine, the Andover-Harvard Theological Library, and the Houghton Library. In addition, the bibliographical usefulness of the catalogues is increased by the inclusion in them of hundreds of Library of Congress depository cards.

A library catalogue is a cumulative and collective work to which many individuals contribute something. It is impossible to enumerate everyone who has worked on the Arabic catalogue since the beginning was made by Dr. Gates in 1914, but the list of those who have helped over the years includes Miss Jessie M. Whitehead, David Dorman, Miss Flora Rizk, Khalil Mahmud, Miss Maude Harrison, Mrs. Su'ad F. Jones, Mrs. Shukriyya Kassis, Fuad Gamal al-Din, Mustafa Musawi, Julius Szentendrey, and Mrs. Sofia Musallam. The Persian catalogue owes a great deal to Iraj Afshar, who revised the old cataloguing and assisted in cataloguing an accumulated backlog during the short period he spent at Harvard in 1963 and 1964. As a result of his efforts, a preliminary edition of the Persian catalogue was published in 1964; as it now stands, however, the Persian catalogue is primarily the work of Hooshang Aalam. The Ottoman Turkish catalogue has been transformed from a finding list to a fine bibliographical tool chiefly by the efforts of Moses Manoushagian and Mrs. Emel Tekin. Finally, credit for the typing and production of cards goes to Mrs. Alice Deyab.

The Harvard University Library's *Catalogue of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish Books* (in four parts, one for each of the languages, with the topical subject cards constituting the fourth) was published during September 1968.[22] This is a major contribution to bibliographical control of Middle Eastern resources in this country, and may be said to mark the coming of age of these resources in American research libraries. Twenty years ago these resources were so neglected that no

[22] This article, in a slightly different form, appears also as the Introduction to this *Catalogue*.

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publications dealing with them were recorded in *Library Literature*. The remarkable upsurge of teaching and research on the Middle East since that time has been matched by growth of library collections. At Harvard, where there were fewer than 3,000 books in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish in 1954, there are now more than 40,000 volumes in these languages and the rate of growth is still increasing. While a number of gaps in the collection, particularly in its classical segments, have been filled, other areas still require strengthening. Special attention must be given to the acquisition of Arabic materials from North Africa, Arabic and Persian chronicles, and local histories of the nineteenth century.

Fully committed to building up its resources in this area of regional studies, the Harvard Library, particularly since 1962, has concentrated on Middle Eastern publications on history, the humanities, language and literature, and the social sciences. Although acquisition policy remains essentially selective, research, both present and prospective, requires a wide range of materials. The objective is not an enormous collection, but one that will satisfy as fully as possible the needs of scholarly research. These needs change from time to time, and the Library must attempt to anticipate changes; the materials should be on its shelves before they are requested. Indeed, if they are not, the Library will find that many of them have become excessively costly if not completely unobtainable.

For American research, the Middle East clearly has arrived and is here to stay. Economic and political crises come and go, but American research on the Middle East is no longer solely of an immediate and practical nature; its interest in the history and culture of the area is now firmly based. Harvard's Middle Eastern collections promise to be useful so long as scholars study the significant chapter of the human experience that these collections record.

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