

# Useful Tips For Finding Arabic and Persian Manuscripts In Different Countries

Nobuko Morishita, Research fellow  
Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of Russian Academy of Sciences  
nobuska@gmail.com

## I. General Introduction

More than 3,000,000 manuscripts(MSS) remain in ca. 5000 libraries in ca. 100 countries

Classified by language, religion or sect, categories

- Classified yet combinedly presented usually at university and national libraries
- Divided at religious and specialized institutions

## Basic References

### 1. GAL

= Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*. 2 vols. 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Weimber: Felber, 1898 & 1902 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Leiden: Brill, 1943-49). Supplement band, 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1937-1942.

### 2. GAS

= Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*. 12 vols. to date. Leiden: Brill, 1967-.

### ※ WSIM

= Geoffrey Roper(ed.), *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*. 4 vols. London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation; Leiden: Brill, 1992-1995.

- The data is becoming old (17-20 years since publication) and needs to be updated
  1. World map changes (borders, city names etc...)
  2. Some collections dispersed or transferred to other locations
  3. Incomplete bibliography and missing information  
See reviews [Smith 1993, Norris 1993, Smith 1994, Wakefield 1994, Norris 1995, Smith 1996-1, Smith 1996-2, Wakefield 1996, McChesney 1997]
- Anomalous arrangement

## Additional references

- Publications (articles, books and references, manuscript catalogs) , Internet
- Key periodicals / organizations:
  - Manuscripts of the Middle East, Manuscripta Orientalia
  - Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies(COMS)
  - Ma'had al-makhṭūṭāt al-'arabīya
  - Juma Al-Majid Centre for Culture & Heritage in Dubai:  
<http://www.almajidcenter.org/arabic/Pages/default.aspx>  
<http://www.almajidcenter.org/english/Pages/SimpleSearchManuscripts.aspx>
  - al-Furqan Heritage Foundation in London: <http://www.al-furqan.com/>
  - Markaz-e pzhūheshī-ye mirāth-e maktūb: <http://www.mirasmaktoob.ir/>
  - Markaz-e ehyā-e mirāth-e eslāmī in Qum: <http://www.mirath.net/start.php>
  - Oriental Manuscript Resource (OMAR) :  
<http://omar.ub.uni-freiburg.de/index.php?id=homepage>
- See also 'Other Resources'

## II. Search By Country

## Turkey<sup>1</sup>

**İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi Kütüphanesi (İSAM)** : <http://www.isam.org.tr/>

İSAM has no manuscripts but their “**Turkish Libraries' Search Engine**” contains 264,489 MS records preserved in 123 libraries of Turkey.

- Request a search from the librarian (Complete catalog unreleased, font problem)

**Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi** (ca. 70,000 MSS)

1. Süleymaniye's own collection and Murat Molla Kütüphanesi Collection.
2. Digital copies of other repositories in Istanbul such as Atıf Efendi (3,228 MSS), Köprülü (3,847 MSS), Nuruosmaniye (5,025 MSS), Ragıp Paşa (1,274 MSS), Hacı Selim Ağa (2,952 MSS) and others, available online on-site.
3. The catalog data of collections at İstanbul Üniversitesi Merkez Kütüphanesi (18,602 MSS), Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi (11,120 MSS), Millet Manuscript Kütüphanesi in İstanbul (8,765 MSS) <sup>2</sup>and Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi (13,073 MSS) etc.

**Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi (TIEM)** (16,381 MSS):

<http://www.tiem.gov.tr/yazi-ve-yazma-eserler.asp>

**Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanesi** (14,811 MSS):

<http://yazmalardtcf.ankara.edu.tr/>

**Milli Kütüphanesi in Ankara** (26,780 MSS): <http://yazmalar.mk.gov.tr/>

**Bursa Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi** (13,875 MSS):

<http://www.yazmakutup.gov.tr/inebey/giris.html>

## Iran<sup>3</sup>

**Aghabozorg**: <http://www.aghabozorg.ir/>

Governmental project to create a union catalog. Contains approximately 400 vols of catalog data of Iranian MSS.

- Incomplete due to lack of funds
- Search with just a keyword or two and try several variants
- Bring printouts of the online data on visit (Numbering, classification)

**Tehran University Central Library and Documentation Center** (ca. 17,000 codices)

<http://ut.ac.ir/en/contents/Library-Documentation/Central.Library.and.Documentation.Center.of.the.University.html>

**Melli-ye Malek National Library and Museum Institution** (19,000 MSS):

<http://www.malekmuseum.org/en/>

**Parliament Library** (ca. 23,000 MSS) : <http://www.ical.ir/moshar.html>

**National Library & Archives** (11,877 MSS): <http://dl.nlai.ir/UI/Forms/Index.aspx>

**Astan-e Quds-e Razavi Library** (30,250 codices):

<http://80.191.111.99/simwebclt/WebAccess/SimWebPortal.dll?LANG=2>

**Mar'ashī Najafī Library** (ca. 25,000 MSS): <http://www.marashilibrary.com/english/index.html>

**Markaz ehyā-e mirāth-e eslāmī**: <http://www.mirath.net/start.php>

\* **Markaz dā'irat al-ma'ārif bozorg islāmī** (5,000 MSS): <http://www.cgie.org.ir/>

## Egypt

**Dār al-kutub wa al-wathā'iq al-qawmiya** (ca. 57,000 MSS):

<http://41.178.1.7/uhtbin/cgiirsi.exe?ps=EPqB4kcjSc/ELDAR/236430011/60/484/X>

**Ma'had al-makhtūṭāt al-'arabiya** (ca. 20,000 MSS): <http://www.makhtutat.net/>

**Maktabat al- makhtūṭāt li-jāmi'at al-'Azhar** (42,164 MSS):

<http://41.178.1.7/uhtbin/cgiirsi.exe?ps=GqMD3puJEq/ELDAR/324200006/60/484/X>

\* **Bibliotheca Alexandrina** (more than 5,000 MSS)<sup>4</sup>:

[http://www.bibalex.org/bacatalog/catalog\\_en.aspx?skin=default&lng=en](http://www.bibalex.org/bacatalog/catalog_en.aspx?skin=default&lng=en)

<sup>1</sup> For the structure of the Turkish libraries, see <http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/>. In 2004 and 2005, Ministry of Culture and Tourism released *The Union Catalog of Turkey's Manuscripts* (3CDs). For more details, see <http://www.mkutup.gov.tr/menu/102>.

<sup>2</sup> Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi (8,813 MSS): <http://www.milletkutup.gov.tr/> (Online Catalog)

<sup>3</sup> Markaz-e pazhūheshī-ye mirāth-e maktūb: <http://www.mirasmaktoob.ir/>, Iranology Foundation (Bonyād-e eslām-e shenāsi): <http://91.98.46.102:8081/>

<sup>4</sup> The microfilms of El Escorial Monastery collection were donated by the queen of Spain to Bibliotheca Alexandrina in 1997. The catalogue of this collection prepared by BA counts 3,343 MSS while the catalogue published El Escorial counts only 1,954. Moreover, the Alexandria municipal library collection and minor collections of Abū al-'Abbās al-Mursī, Port Said, Sumha religious institute were all transferred to BA.

## India<sup>5</sup>

### **National Database of Manuscripts (Kritisampada):**

<http://www.namami.org/Database.htm>

Governmental project to create a union catalog for all manuscripts in India. Incomplete but slowly expanding.

- Incomplete
- Transcribed in English

**Andhra Pradesh Government Oriental Manuscripts Library & Research Institute** (23,000 MSS): <http://manuscriptslibrary.ap.nic.in/>

**Salar Jung Museum Library** (10,000 MSS): <http://www.salarjungmuseum.in/html/library.html>

**Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library** (21,000 MSS): <http://kblibrary.bih.nic.in/> (also see 'Manuscript Catalogues' for descriptions of each manuscript)

**Kutubkhanah-yi Nasiriya** (30,000 MSS): No website

**Rampur Raza Library** (11,993 MSS): <http://razalibrary.gov.in/>

\* **Noor Microfilm Center** (10,000 microfilmed MSS): <http://www.noormicrofilmindia.com/> (22 Indian libraries)

## Morocco<sup>6</sup>

**Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc** (11,087 MSS): <http://bnm.bnrm.ma:86/>

**The Ḥassaniya Royal Library** (ca. 6,000 MSS): No website

**Ṣubayḥiyya Library** (ca. 4,000 MSS): No website

Waqf union catalogues (2 vols) record 13 repositories of waqf properties including collections of mosques and madrasa libraries<sup>7</sup>.

Waqf bookshops in Rabat sell manuscript catalogs for example manuscript catalog of Dār al-Kutub al-Nāṣiriyya in Tamegroute (4,184 MSS), the historical centre of the Naṣiriyya Sufi order. No website).

## III. Other Resources

### Other Union Catalogs and Online Catalogs:

<http://www.fihrist.org.uk/> (UK)

<http://kohd.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/index.html> (Germany)

<http://westafricanmanuscripts.org/history.htm> (Mauritania, West Africa)

King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies: <http://213.150.161.217/kfcris/login.htm>

Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunisie: <http://www.bnt.nat.tn/>

Saudi Arabia Cultural Bureau in Morocco: <http://www.sac.org.ma/culture/ccs582.asp>

### Open Access Islamic Manuscripts Collections:

[http://amirmideast.blogspot.com/2010/12/alphabetical-list-of-open-access\\_10.html](http://amirmideast.blogspot.com/2010/12/alphabetical-list-of-open-access_10.html) (44 listed)

Mustafa Library: <http://al-mostafa.info/books/htm/disp.php?page=list&n=44>

### Hubs:

American University of Beirut: <http://aub.edu.lb/libguides.com/manuscriptreference>  
<http://aub.edu.lb/libguides.com/content.php?pid=271487&sid=2239289>

University of Michigan Library: <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid=18162&sid=179938>

Middle East Medievalists (MEM): <http://www.middleeastmedievalists.org/Manuscript.html>

UCLA: <http://guides.library.ucla.edu/content.php?pid=22907&sid=997329>

Access to Mideast and Islamic Resources (AMIR): <http://amirmideast.blogspot.com/>

<sup>5</sup> See also Khalidi 2002-2003, which includes more complete account of Indian libraries than Khan 1991 in WSIM and Biswas 1998.

<sup>6</sup> See Hendrickson 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *Wizārat al-Awqāf wa al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmīyah. Dalīl makhṭū'āt al-khizānāt al-ḥubusīyah*. 2 vols. Rabat: al-Mamlakah al-Maghribīyah, Wizārat al-Awqāf wa al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmīyah, 2001.

## **Bibliography:**

- Biswas, Subhas C.(ed.) 1998: *Bibliographic Survey of Indian Manuscript Catalogues: Being a Union List of Manuscript Catalogues*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers.
- Hendrickson, Jocelyn 2008: 'A Guide to Arabic Manuscripts Libraries in Morocco, with Notes on Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and Spain,' *MELA Notes*, 81(2008), 15-88.
- Khalidi, Omar 2002-2003: 'A Guide to Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu Manuscript Libraries in India,' *MELA Notes*, 75-76 (Fall 2002-Spring 2003), 1-59.
- Khan, M.S. 1992: 'India,' in Geoffrey Roper (ed.), *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*. vol. 1. London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 395-442.
- McChesney, R.D. 1997: 'World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (117-1), 194-196.
- Norris, H.T. 1993: 'Geoffrey Roper (gen. ed.): World survey of Islamic manuscripts. Vol. I. [xvii], 569 pp. London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1992. Guilders 250, \$143,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (56-2), 371-373.
- 1995: 'Geoffrey Roper (gen. ed.): World survey of Islamic manuscripts. Vol. 2. (Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation Publication no. 5.) vi, 569 pp. London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation. 1993. (Distributed by E.J. Brill.) Guilders 250.,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (58-1), 218.
- Smith, G. Rex 1993: 'World survey of Islamic manuscripts. Vol. I. Edited by Geoffrey Roper. pp. xvi, 269. London, Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1992. Distributed by E. J. Brill, Leiden. Dfl. 250. US \$143.00.,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland (Third Series)* (3-3), 430-431.
- 1994: 'World Survey of Islamic manuscripts. Vol. II. Edited by Geoffrey Roper, pp. vi, 724. London, Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1993. Distributed by E.J. Brill, Leiden. Dfl. 250. US \$143.00.,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland (Third Series)* (4-2), 261-262.
- 1996: 'World survey of Islamic manuscripts. Vol. III. Edited By Geoffrey Roper, pp. vi, 716. London, Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1994. Distributed by E. J. Brill, Leiden. NLG 250, US\$143.00.,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland (Third Series)* (6-1), 88-89.
- 1996: 'World survey of Islamic manuscripts. Vol. IV. (Supplement.) Edited by Geoffrey Roper, pp. ix, 489. London, Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1994. Distributed by E. J. Brill, Leiden. NLG 250. US \$143.00.,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland (Third Series)* (6-2), 234-235.
- Wakefield, Colin 1994: 'WORLD SURVEY OF ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS. General editor: GEOFFREY ROPER. Volumes One and Two. London, Al - Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1992-1993. 2 vols. Distributed by E.J. Brill, Leiden. Hfl. 250.- each vol.,' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (21-1), 141-142.
- 1996: 'WORLD SURVEY OF ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS, Volumes III and IV. General editor: Geoffrey Roper. London, Al - Furqaan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1994. 716 pp. and 489 pp.,' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (23-1), 105-106.
- 

For Christian manuscripts, see:

- Georg Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*. 5 vols. Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944-1953.
- Micheline Albert et al., *Christianismes orientaux: introduction à l'étude des langues et des littératures*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993.
- Gruppo di Ricerca Arabo-Cristiana: [http://www.grac.it/bayt/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=106&lang=en](http://www.grac.it/bayt/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=106&lang=en)
- Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies: <http://198.62.75.1/www1/ofm/fccos/FCCOSmenu.html>
- Brigham Young University: <http://cpart.byu.edu/?page=95&sidebar>
- Hill Museum & Manuscript Library: <http://www.hmml.org/>
- Vatican Library: [http://www.vaticanlibrary.va/home.php?pag=fondi\\_manoscritti](http://www.vaticanlibrary.va/home.php?pag=fondi_manoscritti)
- Codex Sinaiticus: <http://www.sinaimonastery.com/en/index.php?lid=103>,  
<http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/>
- American University of Beirut: <http://aub.edu.lb/libguides.com/manuscriptreference>
- Mingana Collection: [http://vmr.bham.ac.uk/Collections/Mingana/part/Christian\\_Arabic/](http://vmr.bham.ac.uk/Collections/Mingana/part/Christian_Arabic/)
- Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth: <http://www.bo.usj.edu.lb/files/archiv.php>
- Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik: <http://www.usek.edu.lb/fr/Bibliotheque-Centrale>
- Notre-Dame University of Beirut: <http://www.ndu.edu.lb/library/index.htm>
- Monastery libraries in the middle east.