Islamic Manuscripts online – A new Database at Leipzig University
www.islamic-manuscripts.net

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I. General information about Islamic manuscripts in Germany

Like the treasuries of Islamic Art in general, Islamic manuscripts reached Europe and the German region during the so called Middle Ages through political and trade contacts. Partly received as gifts from emperors or noble men, partly taken violently as booty in battles and wars, items of Islamic art that reached Europe were mainly held by the nobility and in church treasuries. Many collections of Oriental and Islamic manuscripts in Europe today originate from the close contact with the Ottoman Empire from the 17th to the 19th century. Diplomatic contacts, travelling, as well as wars against the "Turks" brought many pieces of Islamic art and manuscripts into the possession of German and other European rulers, noble men or scholars. These objects are called "Turkish booties" and they are held until today mainly in libraries and museums, e.g. in Karlsruhe[1]. Due to the political development and fragmentation as well as the later secularisation, these collections have often been dispersed.

As Oriental studies became independent from theology and constituted a mainly philological subject in the 19th century, manuscripts were the basis for scholarly research. Manuscripts were either purchased or appropriated and then transferred to German libraries or museums. Only a small number of scholars travelled to Arabic countries (or beyond) to study the manuscripts in their original localities.

During the 19th century's imperialistic expansion of European nations, cultural and scholarly activities became intertwined with politics. From 1873 to 1914, Germany successively put into service a number of directors for the former Khedivial Library in Cairo, both for the sake of scholarly interests and to secure political influence. These were: Ludwig Stern (1873-1874),Wilhelm Spitta (1875-1882), Karl Vollers (1886-1896), Bernhard Moritz (1896-1911), and Arthur Schaade (1913-1914). H.L. Fleischer was partly involved in the nominations. Karl Vollers, who from 1896 on became professor in Jena, had produced catalogues for the Khedieval Library and, after his return, wrote the second important catalogue for the Leipzig University Library.[2] German libraries and museums continued to purchase manuscripts in the interwar and post-World War II periods.[3]

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[1] www.tuerkenbeute.de

[2] MANGOLD, Sabine. Die Khedivial-Bibliothek zu Kairo und ihre deutschen Bibliothekare (1871-1914). In: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 157, 1 (2007), p. 49-76.
MANGOLD, Sabine. Eine „weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft" – die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert. Stuttgart 2004.

[3] For a general introduction to Islamic art and manuscripts in German collections see:
GIERLICHS, Joachim and Hagedorn, Annette (eds). Islamic Art in Germany. Mainz am Rhein 2004.
(The holdings of Leipzig University Library are unfortunately not included.)

II. General information about the cataloguing of Islamic manuscripts in Germany

A central catalogue encompassing *all* existing Islamic manuscripts in Germany has not been compiled yet. "The Union Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts in German Collections" (Katalogisierung der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, KOHD) is an import long-term project that comes closest to this goal.[4] Founded in 1957, KOHD aims at cataloguing *all* Oriental manuscripts in Germany, including Asian languages, Arabic Christian manuscripts, Hebrew manuscripts etc. As the participation in KOHD was left to the deliberation of the libraries themselves, Leipzig University Library has unfortunately missed that chance in the past. The project will come to an end in 2015 with some collections inevitably remaining unconsidered.

A series of printed catalogues has been published by the KOHD, thereby setting standards for cataloguing in Germany. Whereas both public and private libraries have their own cataloguing systems, our project adheres to the guidelines of KOHD, albeit not completely.

III. Holdings of Leipzig University Library

The Leipzig University Library holds approximately 3200 Oriental manuscripts, the major part being Islamic manuscripts (app. 1700). Most of these Islamic manuscripts are in Arabic, followed by Persian and Ottoman manuscripts.

Albeit smaller in quantity than the holdings of the State Libraries in Munich and Berlin, Leipzig was referred to as probably one the best manuscript collections in Germany in Geoffrey Roper's *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*.[5] Even though Kufic manuscripts are not part of the holdings, Leipzig University Library includes one of the largest and most precious collections of Qur'ānic manuscripts (about 100 items), dating mainly from the 8th (14th century AD) century of the Hijra onwards. Surely one of the most precious items of the Qur'ān collection is a ǧuz' of the large scale Mongolian Qur'ān that had been completed in Baghdād in 706/1306-7 for the Ilḫānīd ruler Ulǧaitu (Ḫudābanda), who ruled from 1304-1316.[6] Another precious manuscript is the so far oldest known Ismā'īlī manuscript by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, "Kitāb al-Zīna" (see below).

The holdings do not only encompass private libraries of various renowned German scholars but also the complete library of the Damascene (?) family ar-Rifā'ī which had been purchased in Damascus in the 19th century. It is a precious collection regarding its manuscripts as well as the significance in the cultural historical context. According to H.L. Fleischer, it contains 487 manuscripts[7], dating from the 10th to the 19th century AD, and it covers a wide variety of subjects.

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[4] see: http://kohd.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de

[5] ROPER, Geoffrey. World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts, 4 vols. London 1992-1994. Vol. 1, p. 349.

[6] See also JAMES, David. Qur'āns of the Mamlūks. London 1988, p. 92-99, Catalogue Nr. 40, p. 235-236. James identifies 3 aǧzā' (1, 10, and 29) of the Mongolian Baghdād Qur'ān at Karl Marx University Library (the library's name before the German reunion), but the source of his information is unclear. In fact, Leipzig University Library holds only one manuscript, and even the oldest catalogues of Kehr and Fleischer only mention one, not three. But obviously, the Ulǧaitu-Qur'ān manuscript in Leipzig consists of more than one ǧuz', albeit not complete. Why and when parts of several aǧzā' had been united in the manuscript with an apparently old binding, is not yet clear. Likewise, James refers to two manuscripts of two ǧuz' at the Library in Dresden, even though all catalogues do mention one. Plans for a closer investigation on these manuscripts of the famous Ulǧaitu-Qur'ān are currently in progress.

[7] FLEISCHER, H.L. Die Refaiya. In: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 8 (1854), p. 573-584. It should be noted though that according to the call numbers in the catalogue of Karl Vollers (see chapter VI of this article), the collection encompasses 432 manuscripts (with the call number DC) and 10 volumes in the amendment.

IV. History and State of Cataloguing at Leipzig University Library[8]

The main holdings of the manuscript collections originate from the close contact to the Ottoman Empire from the 17th to the 19th century. The purchase or donation of collections of scholars for Oriental Studies, such as August Pfeiffer (1640-1698), Andreas Acoluthus (1654-1704), Johann Christoph Wagenseil (1633-1705), and Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller (1768-1835) contributed greatly to the compilation and establishment of the Islamic manuscript collection at Leipzig University Library. First serious attempts to describe the already vast collection led to an - unfortunately lost - work by the later famous scholar of Chinese in St. Petersburg, Gottfried Siegfried Bayer (1694-1738), in 1717, comprising all Oriental holdings from Arabic and Hebrew to Chinese. Georg Jacob Kehr (1692-1740) wrote another comprehensive catalogue, this time only comprising Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts, at the beginning of the 18th century. His catalogue refers to the "Ratsbibliothek" (Senate Library), which became "Stadtbibliothek" (Municipal Library) in the 19th century (Fleischer's catalogue from 1838 therefore refers to the "Stadtbibliothek").

Further additions were made by the acquisition of the private library of the (Damascene?) family al-Rifāʾī in 1853 by the efforts of the Prussian Consul in Damascus, Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815-1905), and the famous scholar of Arabic Philology, Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801-1888) in Leipzig.[9] In 1962, the manuscript collection of the former Municipal Library became part of the University Library, containing 376 manuscripts that had been catalogued by H. L. Fleischer and his student Franz Delitzsch in 1838.

All these manuscripts are described in two published catalogues:

1. Fleischer, H.L. und Delitzsch, F. Codices Orientalium Linguarum descripserunt H.L. Fleischer et F. Delitzsch. Grimma 1838. Reprint Osnabrück 1985.

2. Vollers, Carl. Katalog der islamischen, christlich-orientalischen, jüdischen und samaritanischen Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig. Leipzig 1906. Reprint Osnabrück 1975.
(This catalogue includes the Rifāʾīya Collection.)

As Latin is not used widely in the academia anymore, the Latin-Arabic catalogue of H. L. Fleischer is currently translated - partly paraphrased – by Boris Liebrenz into English-Arabic. The translated and shortened catalogue of H. L. Fleischer will be available online in summer 2008, in addition with the digitised versions of the original catalogues of H.L. Fleischer and K. Vollers.

The contact to the Ottoman Empire led also to the fact that Shīʿī manuscripts are represented on a comparatively small scale in German collections. Prof. Dr. Verena Klemm and Dr. Stefanie Brinkmann from the Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Leipzig, are currently working with two Shīʿī manuscripts: an Ismāʿīlī manuscript, apparently one of the oldest so far known Ismāʿīlī manuscripts ("Kitāb al-Zīna" by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/934), copied 14. Rabīʿ al-Awwal 544/1149 in the area of Rayy), for which plans for an edition are

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[8] For a general overview on German librarianship see SEEFELDT, JÜRGEN and SYRÈ, LUDGER. Portals to the past and to the future – libraries in Germany. 2nd revised edition, Hildesheim 2007. (This standard work has been published also in German, Spanish, Turkish, Arabic and Russian.)

[9] FLEISCHER, H.L. Die Refaiya. In: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 8 (1854), p. 573-584.
DÖRING, D. Der Erwerb der Refaiya-Handschriften durch die sächsische Regierung im Jahre 1853. In: Reuschel, W. (Hrsg.). Orientalistische Philologie und Arabische Linguistik. Asien-Afrika-Latein Amerika-Sonderheft 2 (1990), p. 19-23.

currently elaborated by Prof. V. Klemm; and an Ithnā ʿAsharīya manuscript by ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī ("Minhāǧ al-karāma fī maʿrifat al-imāma", copied in 740-41/1340, dedicated to the Ilkhānīd ruler Ulǧaitu Ḫudābanda), with which Dr. S. Brinkmann is working in cooperation with Boris Liebrenz in the course of the preparation for a manuscript exhibition and a catalogue (July-September 2008).

Another approximately 150 Islamic manuscripts have been acquired between the First and the Second World War. These, however, have not been catalogued yet. In 1995 and 1996, 55 items have been purchased and so far indexed in the form of a handlist by Prof. Dr. Holger Preissler, and later by Dr. S. Brinkmann. This group of manuscripts is being catalogued and digitised now in the course of a project sponsored by the German Research Foundation (see below).[10]

V. The Project (www.islamic-manuscripts.net)

1. General information

The official name of the project is "The Project for the database-supported indexing and digital disposal of newly acquired Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts by the library of the University of Leipzig". It is funded by the German Research Institute (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) and constitutes a part of their programme "Cultural Heritage" in the field of "Scientific Library Services and Information systems (LIS)". Duration is one and a half years and it will terminate by January 2008. The research coordinators are Prof. Dr. Verena Klemm, Chair of Arabic and Oriental Studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies, and Prof. Dr. Ulrich Johannes Schneider, Director of Leipzig University Library.

In cooperation with: Dr. Thomas Friedrich, Director of the Data Processing Service Centre of Leipzig University; PD Dr. Thomas Fuchs, Head of the Manuscript Centre at Leipzig University Library; PD Dr. Alfred Scharsky, Head of the Data Processing Service Centre of Leipzig University Library; Dr. Stefanie Brinkmann, university research lecturer (wissenschaftliche Assistentin) at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Leipzig University.

The team: Beate Wiesmüller, responsible for the cataloguing; Jens Kupferschmidt of the Data Processing Service Centre of Leipzig University for the development of the database; Dr. Thoralf Hanstein, team coordinator and responsible for the coordination of technical presuppositions and specific needs of the Arabic script and the transcription fonts; Elisabeth Fritsch, Photo Department of Leipzig University Library.

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[10] Further literature concerning the holdings of Leipzig University Library:
DÖRING, D. Die Quellen zur Geschichte der Leipziger Orientalistik von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts im Bestand der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig. In: : Reuschel, W. (Hrsg.). Orientalistische Philologie und Arabische Linguistik. Asien-Afrika-Latein Amerika-Sonderheft 2 (1990), p. 13-18.
HARTMANN, M. Die arabisch-islamischen Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig und der Sammlungen Hartmann und Haupt. In: ZA 23 (1909), p. 235-260.
MÜLLER, G. Orientalische Handschriften. In: Debes, D. (Hrsg.). Zimelien. Bücherschätze der Universitäts-Bibliothek Leipzig. Leipzig 1988, p. 139ff.
PREISSLER, H. Leipziger Handschriften von Werken des Bagdader Predigers Abu l-Fara' ibn al-Ǧauzi (510-597/1116-1201). In: Bellmann, D. (Hrsg.). Gedenkschrift Wolfgang Reuschel. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes LI, 1, Stuttgart 1994, p. 217-223.
PREISSLER, H. Orientalische Studien in Leipzig vor Reiske. In: Ebert, H.G. und Hanstein, Th. (Hrsg). Johann Jacob Reiske – Leben und Wirkung. Leipzig 2005.
SEYBOLD, C.F. Der gelehrte Syrer Carlous Dadichi (st. 1734 in London), Nachfolger Salomo Negri's (st. 1729). In: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 64 (1910), p. 591ff.
WUSTMANN, G. Geschichte der Leipziger Stadtbibliothek, 1. Hälfte 1677-1801. In: Neujahrsblätter der Bibliothek und des Archivs der Stadt Leipzig 2 (1906), p. 1-122.

The decision to begin with a smaller collection of manuscripts, namely the 55 Arabic and Persian manuscripts that had been purchased in 1995 and 1996, has been taken in order to develop initially a new database that can be used further on for other collections. As the development of the database is not finalized yet, some items might not be digitised yet, or not be translated from German into the other languages. Also, some refinements still have to be done, especially concerning the presentation of the digitised manuscripts as well as the search engine.

2. Cataloguing

2.1. Languages
The page can be used in three languages: German, English and Arabic. This applies not only to the main texts, but each catalogued item and the search engine.

2.2. Transcription
The following transcription systems are used: for the German it is the standard transcription of the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, in short DMG). For the English version the Library of Congress system is applied. It has to be stressed though, that additionally the system will be able to search without transcription fonts.[11] An Arabic as well as a transcription font keybord has been added on the desktop.

2.3. Workform
The cataloguing system of our database corresponds to the guidelines of the KOHD (see II), albeit partly in reduced form. Incipit and explicit have been omitted because these texts can be seen in digitised form. With one exception: if a manuscript (title and/or author) couldn't be identified, then the incipit and explicit will be reproduced in the original language in place of the author's name and/or the title of the work.
The database offers a brief and a detailed catalogue pro-forma.

Brief Description

Description of texts

Call number - recent	
Author's name - short form - complete form - date of death - reference	
Title - in Ms	
Language	
Completeness	
Subject Matter	

Physical Description

Nr. of volumes	
Binding	

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[11] The search in Latin characters can be completed with "Ḥāfiẓ" as well as "Hafez"(integrated authority list of PICA).

- material	
Writing material - material	
Number of pages	
Dimensions	
Text area	
Number of lines	
Script - style	
Illumination	
Illustration	
Miniatures	
Copyist	
Date of copy	
Place of copy	
Owner	
Reference URL	

Detailed Description

Description of texts

Call number - recent - Preißler - Olim UB	
Author's name - short form - complete form - date of death - place of activity - reference	
Title - in Ms - in reference - versions	
Language	
Completeness	
Subject Matter	
Content	
Notes	information about endowments, seal stamps, text corrections of the copyist, various entries

Physical Description

Nr. of volumes	
Binding - material - state of preservation	
Writing material - material - colour - watermarks - state of preservation	
Number of pages	
Dimensions	
Text area	
Number of lines	
Catchwords	Complete yes/no
Script - style - ink - characteristics	
Illumination	
Illustration	
Miniatures	
Copyist	
Date of copy	
Place of copy	
Date of autograph	
Place of autograph	
Ownership statements	
Further copies	
Editions	
Translations	
Author of record	
Status	
Owner	

Reference URL	

2.4. Search options
Five options are given: to browse the catalogue, a filter, as well as to do a simple, an extended and an advanced search.

a. Browse the catalogue
The catalogue presents the call number of the manuscript, title and author. The call number leads the user to the catalogue's brief description.

b. The filter
The filter allows a specific search for the following criteria: language, material, material colour, catchwords, script-style, ink colour, completeness, subject matter.

c. Simple search
Enter a word.

d. Extended Search
Call number
Language (select)
Author
Title
Date not before
Date not after
Place
Subject matter (select)
Full text

e. Advanced search
Call number
Language (select)
Author
Title
Date not before
Date not after
Place
Subject matter (select)
Script style
Illumination
Illustration
Miniatures
Further copies
Editions
Translations
Full text

It should be noted again that the search engine can be used in the relevant three languages.

3. Digitising

3.1. General

The database includes complete digitisation, including the binding and the outer parts of the bound folios. The scanned images are processed using the MyCoRe system (www.MyCoRe.de) which is an open source freeware, specialised on the needs of digital libraries and archive solutions. MyCoRe has a flexible, configurable metadata model. It has an internal, hierarchical data system, a hierarchical classification system, as well as an user and rights management. The core of the software is governed by the conditions of GNU (General Public License). The work with MyCoRe has proven itself already in other projects, such as the Papyrus-Project Leipzig-Halle-Jena.[12]

The master scans are taken with a resolution of 300 dpi and saved in TIFF file-format. Colour and size scales are being included. The colour depth is set at 48 bit. As a second step, the TIFF file master scans get converted to JPEG (300 dpi) and finally to 96 dpi for the online presentation. It has to be stressed that so far the images that can be seen on the database have not more than 96 dpi. It is currently discussed if the 96 dpi should not be scaled up to 150 dpi in order to allow better enlargements. In order to see the master scans, the user is kindly asked to contact the University Library.

For more information concerning the technical development and the scanning techniques see under "documention" on *www.islamic-manuscripts.net*.

VI. Concluding remarks

By using the Arabic script in combination with scholarly transcription fonts, this database aims at a new and internationally usable and adaptable standard for the online cataloguing. This technology has been developed by the Data Processing Service Centre of Leipzig University. Complete digitisation serves the preservation of the manuscripts as well as the possibilities for scholarly research worldwide. The Institute of Oriental Studies and Leipzig University Library will continue their joint efforts for the heritage of the Islamic manuscripts. The cataloguing will continue with the developed database. An exhibition with chosen manuscripts for the year 2008 (July-September 2008), accompanied by a catalogue in German and English, is in preparation. Research is carried out for the precious manuscripts of Abū Hātim al-Rāzī, al-Ḥillī and the Ulǧaitu-Qur'ān, as well as for the complete private library of the Rifāʿī family from Damascus, which will deal to a large extend with the question of private libraries as part of cultural history. The challenge is to ensure all these activities facing financial cutbacks, a missing specialist for Islamic manuscripts at the Library and a constantly growing demand of adjusting research to economical and even political requests.

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[12] see: http://papyri-leipzig.dl.uni-leipzig.de