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THE MIDDLE EASTERN HOLDINGS OF THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF LEIDEN

J.J. Witkam

What follows is the text of a paper read at the 3rd International Conference of Middle Eastern Librarians in Europe (MELCOM), held in Berlin, 6-9 April 1981.

The University Library is entirely dependent on Leiden State University. Its Oriental holdings consist not only of materials of Middle Eastern interest but also of Indonesian, Indian, Chinese and Japanese printed books and manuscripts. Most printed books and all manuscripts are available in the two reading rooms, one general Oriental reading room and one Oriental manuscripts reading room, which are both located in the main building of the Library. Most printed books are available for loan. The Library will move to a new building, which is now under construction -- also in the centre of Leiden -- and the actual move of the Oriental department will take place in the autumn of 1983. Considerable attention and energy are already being devoted to preparations for the move. The present address of the Library is: Rapenburg 70-74, P.O.Box 9501, Leiden, Netherlands.

Here I will speak only of the Middle Eastern holdings of the Library, and mainly about the manuscripts collection at that. The Leiden University Library is now the only library in the Netherlands which is still regularly acquiring Oriental manuscripts. The other university libraries, where no great Oriental collections are found anyway, are not expanding their present Oriental manuscript holdings.

Six years ago Leiden University celebrated its fourth centenary. But already shortly after its foundation in 1575 the first Oriental manuscripts and printed books, mainly Arabic (amongst them, one in Samaritan characters) and Hebrew, arrived from several sources, the main collection in the early days being the Scaliger bequest of 1609. In 1609 Jacobus Golius brought back large collections of manuscripts, mainly Arabic, from Aleppo and Istanbul. About 200 copies of these are still in Leiden, but about twice as many were sold by auction after his death and are now for the greater part preserved within the Marsh collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

By far the most important collection of manuscripts to arrive in Leiden was the Warner bequest. Levinus Warner, a friend and pupil of Golius, had been for many years the Dutch Resident (whose status was approximately equivalent to that of ambassador at the time) to the Porte in Istanbul. During his stay there he took part in the intellectual life of the city and was constantly in pursuit of manuscripts. Printed Arabic books were then not yet produced in Islamic countries. When he died his collection amounted to more than 1,000 volumes, about 800 of which were Arabic manuscripts, together with some Persian, Turkish and quite a large collection (about eighty volumes) of Hebrew

manuscripts. All these arrived safely in Leiden and still form the core of the Islamic collection.

Among them are, for example, a copy of Abū 'Ubayd's *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, written on paper and copied in the year A.H. 252, the unique manuscript of Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, the only known copy of al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa*, and the unique copy of the first six books of Euclid's 'Elements' in the version of al-Hajjāj. These examples are by no means exceptional in this remarkable collection. No such spectacular acquisitions were made in the following centuries, but the Library has, up to the present day, always been in a position to purchase manuscripts from different sources. Furthermore, it has received several bequests. In this century a large bequest was the Snouck Hurgronje collection of more than 1,000 Indonesian manuscripts, including a considerable number of Arabic texts from Indonesia. Recently the Library acquired the manuscripts collections of Franz Taeschner and Rene Basset.

As you all know the acquisition of manuscripts cannot be planned, as nobody knows beforehand what will be offered on the market. However, the Board of Governors of the University has in past years always been very understanding and generous in allocating funds for the purchase of Oriental manuscripts. As a result, about 1,200 Arabic manuscripts and a few hundred Persian and Turkish manuscripts have been acquired over the past twenty years.

I will now say a word about the catalogues of the Leiden Oriental manuscripts collection. The oldest catalogue still in use is the one started by Dozy in 1851 and continued by him and his successors for about twenty years. Their catalogue was to have contained descriptions of all Oriental manuscripts in the collection. This never came to pass: the description of the Indonesian manuscripts was postponed, and finally they were left out altogether. Although the Dozy catalogue gave, at the time of its completion, a full survey of the Middle Eastern manuscript holdings of the library, the accessions poured in so rapidly and in such numbers that it was decided to make an Arabic catalogue. This one was never completed. The second volume dates from 1907 and is written, like its predecessor, in Latin. Both catalogues had been arranged according to subject, which reflects the purely philological purposes they were meant to serve. From this kind of arrangement it follows that the author of a catalogue has to dismember the composite manuscripts, so to speak. That, in my view, is a major disadvantage from which the *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* also suffers.

But back to the Leiden catalogue: although a catalogue was desired, none was actually made. Until 1946 the keeper of Oriental manuscripts and printed books was C. van Arendonk, who was possessed of such wide erudition that he was considered, during the thirty years of his employment in the library, to be its walking manuscripts' catalogue. When he died, the need of a

catalogue once more became urgent. To provide a practical solution the then keeper of the Oriental collection, P.Voorhoeve, published in 1957 his *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts*, written in English. It gives, for most Arabic manuscripts in the library, the title, the author, a short reference to Brockelmann, the date of copying, the number of pages and the class mark, but nothing more. The *Handlist* is arranged alphabetically according to the title of the text, and untitled texts were arranged according to subject. The issue of 500 copies went out of print about ten years ago, and last year, in 1980, it was decided to have it photomechanically reprinted and considerably enlarged. The size was increased by about 200 pages, but no manuscripts acquired since the publication of the first edition were described in the second edition. The Library is now discussing the possibility of the publication of an extensive catalogue of Arabic manuscripts, which will be prepared, at least in the initial phase, by me. I had hoped that the financial arrangements would take less time. Had they done so, a first fascicule could have been published by the end of 1981. For practical and financial reasons it was decided to publish a yearly fascicule of around 100 pages. Every four or five years an introductory sheet, indexes and a binding are to be supplied, very much along the line of Brill's *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Simultaneously with the completion of each volume it is intended to publish a collection of all dated specimens described in that volume, in order to provide materials for a history of Arabic palaeography and codicology. But these are only great expectations as no one knows how the economic recession will have its effects on these projects.

To complete my survey I will now give a short list of the state of affairs with the cataloguing of the other Middle Eastern manuscripts:

Turkish manuscripts. The most recent catalogue is the one by Dozy and his collaborators. Hundreds of Turkish manuscripts have been acquired since then. The collection now comprises around 500 volumes.

Persian manuscripts. The situation is the same as for the Turkish manuscripts. For a few years now there has been a card catalogue, which is fairly up to date. The collection consists of around 500 volumes.

Hebrew manuscripts: a supplement to the Latin catalogue by Steinschneider (1858) was published in the series 'Codices Manuscripti' of manuscript catalogues in 1977 (by A. van der Heide). Since then only a few Hebrew manuscripts have been acquired. The collection now comprises some 200 volumes.

Armenian manuscripts. The bulk of the Armenian manuscripts was catalogued by Macler in 1924. Only a few manuscripts have been acquired since then. The collection comprises about 80 volumes.

Ethiopian manuscripts. Until quite recently the Library hardly possessed any Ethiopian manuscripts, but then several smaller collections and one large collection were purchased. A catalogue (by H.S. Sergew) now exists in draft. The collection is made up of around 90 volumes.

European manuscripts of Oriental interest. These are the materials which always fall between two stools, if one prepares catalogues according to language. In this catalogue will be described personal archives of scholars, their personal notes, letter collections, travelogues, etc.

Minor Islamic and/or Middle Eastern collections in Leiden contain a few Albanian, Georgian, Kurdish, Malagasy and Urdu manuscripts. An important Islamic collection, which, however, falls outside the scope of this conference, as it is not Middle Eastern, is the Malay collection, with 1500 volumes the largest collection of Malay manuscripts outside Indonesia. These are now being catalogued in a project that is financed by funds coming from the cultural treaty between Indonesia and the Netherlands.

Finally, a short word may be said about the funds with which the current cataloguing projects are financed. The Library publishes a series of manuscripts catalogues, under the series name 'Codices Manuscripti', of which now twenty volumes have appeared. These contain both Western and Oriental materials. The University gives a subsidy for each project and distributes the catalogue. Later, the University receives its share of the profit, if any. Until now it has never been difficult to procure sufficient funds for these publications. The Library is not, however, in the position to offer the authors of a catalogue any salary or appointment. This means that the authors usually hold an academic appointment already and that, as a rule, no new posts can be created for the purpose.

Appendix: The Leiden Catalogues

- R.P.A.Dozy (e.a.), *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno Batavae*. (Vols. I, II, Leiden 1851; vols. III, IV, by P.de Jong and M.J.de Goeje, Leiden 1865-1866; vol. V, by M.J.de Goeje, Leiden 1873; vol. VI by M.T.Houtsma, Leiden 1877). Vol. V contains also descriptions of manuscripts in other collections in the Netherlands.
- R.P.A.Dozy, *Notices sur quelques manuscrits arabes*. Leiden, 1847-1851.
- P.de Jong, *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Regiae Scientiarum*, etc. Leiden 1862. Contains descriptions of the Oriental manuscripts in the library of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam. The Oriental manuscripts from this library are now in the Leiden University Library on permanent loan.
- C.Landberg, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes provenant d'une bibliothèque privée à El-Medina et appartenant à la Maison Brill*. Leiden 1883. This collection was purchased by Leiden University.
- M.J.de Goeje and M.T.Houtsma, *Catalogus Codicum Arabicorum Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae*. (Vol.I, Leiden 1888; vol. II, 1, by M.J.de Goeje and T.W.Juynboll, Leiden 1907).
- P.Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts*, etc. Leiden 1957. Second enlarged edition: The Hague, etc. 1980. (Codices Manuscripti, 7). The *Handlist* contains all Arabic manuscripts

described in the above-mentioned catalogues, together with the accessions up to 1957.

- P.S.van Koningsveld, 'The Arabic Manuscripts Collection of Rene Basset (1855-1924)', in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 30 (1973), pp.370-385, and 31 (1974), p.160.
- P.S.van Koningsveld, 'Ten Arabic Manuscript-Volumes of Historical Contents Acquired by the Leiden University Library after 1957', in E.van Donzel (ed.), *Studies on Islam* (Amsterdam 1974), pp.92-110.

Other Middle Eastern collections:

- M.Steinschneider, *Catalogus Codicum Hebraeorum Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae*. Leiden 1858.
- Albert van der Heide, *Hebrew Manuscripts of Leiden University Library*. Leiden 1977 (*Codices Manuscripti*, 18).
- F.Macler, *Rapport sur une mission scientifique en Belgique, Hollande, Danemark et Suède*, etc. Paris 1924. Pp.19-164 deal with the Leiden collection of Armenian manuscripts.

The History of Oriental and/or Arabic Studies in the Netherlands is treated by:

- W.M.C.Juynboll, *Zeventiende-eeuwsche Beoefenaars van het Arabisch in Nederland*. Utrecht 1931.
- J.Nat, *De studie van de Oosterse talen in de 18e en 19e eeuw*. Purmerend 1929.
- G.W.J.Drewes (e.a.), *Levinus Warner and his Legacy. Three Centuries' Legatum Warnerianum in the Leiden University Library*, etc. Leiden 1970.
- J.Brugman and F.Schröder, *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands*. Leiden 1978 (1975-1979). Text both in English and in Arabic.
- A.H.de Groot. *De betekenis van de Nederlandse ambassade bij de Verheven Porte voor de studie van het Turks in de 17e en 18e eeuw*. Leiden 1979.
- J.J.Witkam, *Jacobus Golius (1596-1667) en zijn handschriften*. Leiden 1980.