Germany

Through acquaintance with the literature of the East, the student is carried beyond the narrow limits of European prejudices and associations. . . . Oriental pursuits are of the highest philosophical importance.

Aloys Sprenger (1813–93)

The relationship between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Islamic world draws on a well-established and highly regarded tradition of academic scholarship which can be traced back to the sixteenth century. It has earned for German scholarship an important position in the development of Western thinking about the Muslim world.

The German connection with Islam, however, is fundamentally different from that developed by Britain, France or The Netherlands. It is a connection based largely on diplomatic and scholarly interchange. It could almost be described as a textual relationship, for although the Germans have contributed many of the most important academic texts in Western Islamic scholarship, this has been done without the support of the strong political and economic links which have been so characteristic of the British, French and Dutch relationships with the Muslim world.

There was never a sustained German colonial presence in any Muslim country, and certainly nothing in the tradition of the English and Dutch trading companies. German travellers and scholars journeying to Muslim countries were therefore not as numerous as those from Britain or France. There were, of course, diplomatic links — links with the Ottoman Empire were particularly strong — and individual German scholars did make efforts to travel in India, Egypt, Syria and Persia. But, on the whole, Islamic scholarship flourished in a more theoretical atmosphere than was the case in other Western European countries. The German experience of Islam and the Islamic world has largely been an experience of the intellect, a contact developed by scholars and writers in search of experience and learning, not by soldiers and traders in quest of power and spices.

German scholars of Islam had little of that direct stimulation of interest in the Muslim world engendered by the development of close political economic and cultural relations which their British, French and Dutch colleagues were able to benefit from. There was no German empire in India or the East Indies.
Nevertheless, German Islamic scholarship did flourish. Although they were denied an immediate and easy access to the Muslim world, some German scholars did make efforts to travel and study in Muslim countries. Sprenger, Wetstein and Hartmann all spent long periods out of Germany, and they were by no means unique.

Against this background there developed in the nineteenth century a German academic tradition in Islamic studies that was one of the most impressive in western Europe. German Islamic scholarship was cultivated and perfected as an exact science, approached with rigorous discipline and academic excellence. It is sometimes said that German scholarship treated Islam as it treated classical Greek and Latin literature or the study of Sanskrit and the Hindu Vedas — as an area of knowledge far removed from everyday life and practical reality. There is some justification in this view, but it ignores the very vital contributions made by many German scholars who had direct experience of the Muslim world.

By the time the Second World War broke out in 1939, German Islamic scholarship had made an impressive contribution to Western knowledge and understanding about Islam, and scholars like Fischer, Noedlke and Brockelmann were considered pre-eminent in their areas of specialization. Together with the French, the Germans had also emerged as the great theoreticians of western European Islamic studies. Supporting this scholarship were universities and libraries with strong interests in Islamic studies in cities such as Berlin, Munich, Leipzig, Hamburg, Dresden and Königsberg. All of them held important collections of Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Indo-Persian manuscripts and printed books.

The German relationship with Islam and the Islamic world stretches back to the era of the Crusades, and in common with other Europeans, Germans were prominent in most of the major Crusades, particularly the Third Crusade (1188–92), when Conrad of Hohenstaufen fought alongside King Richard of England and King Philip of France. Thereafter, German interest in the Muslim world faded. The two centuries which followed the Third Crusade were characterized by the German ‘Drang nach Osten’ (Drive to the East). But the East which now inspired German ambitions was not that of the Muslims, but of the Slav races east of the River Elbe. Direct German colonization and conquest led to the emergence of new settlements as far east as Riga in Latvia and to the rise of the powerful Hanseatic League, which dominated the economic life of central and eastern Europe for over a century.

The fourteenth century was also to witness the collapse of the German medieval empire, which under the Hohenstaufen dynasty had stretched over most of the territories of central Europe, and the rise of the independent principalities.

Throughout the following three centuries Germany was to remain a mosaic of small principalities, and it would not be until the seventeenth century with the rise of Prussia that some measure of territorial cohesion would again be achieved.
But it was the nineteenth century which would witness the real development of Islamic studies in Germany, and which would place Germany on the international scholarly scene. This astonishing development took place against a background of increasing German political and economic strength, culminating in the unification of Germany in 1871, and the rule of Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815–98). Although there was pressure for Germany to chart an imperial course similar to that pursued by Britain and France, this was resisted, and German overseas possessions that were acquired — such as German East Africa and German South Africa — were far from being part of a planned imperial strategy. Bismarck disliked the idea of overseas colonies, and he actively discouraged Germans from settling in them. Germany’s interests — as far as he was concerned — lay where they had always been, in central and eastern Europe, and it was there that he wished to channel the energies of the German peoples.

Thus it can be seen that in contrast to Britain, France, or The Netherlands, Germany in the nineteenth century had virtually no contact with the Muslim world except through normal diplomatic and academic channels. There was no attempt made to occupy a Muslim country and no German Islamic scholar would play the role of a Christian Smack Hurgronic, both a professor at Leiden University and an adviser to the Netherlands East Indies colonial government. For Germans, Islam and Islamic studies would remain largely an academic discipline, which many would approach in almost the same spirit as they approached the ancient Sanskrit texts of India.

Those German Islamic scholars who did travel in the Muslim world were often drawn to Turkey, which in the twentieth century became a major centre for German Islamic studies. A number of Germans, such as Helmut Ritter and Friedrich Giese, spent periods in Istanbul or Ankara studying Ottoman history and culture.

The great names in nineteenth-century German scholarship are numerous, and only the outstanding figures can be mentioned. Among them are Theodor Noldeke (1836–1930), whose seminal work Geschichte des Korans (History of the Qur'an) was published in Göttingen in 1880, Gustav Weil, author of the Historische-Kritisiche Einleitung in den Koran (Critical History of the Qur'an), published in Bielefeld in 1844, and Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), who wrote Muhammad in Medina, published in Berlin in 1882. A.F. von Schack (1815–94) wrote one of the definitive studies of art and culture in Muslim Spain and Sicily in his book Poesie und Kunst der Araber in Spanien und Sizilien (Berlin, 1865), and Josef von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856) produced in seven volumes the Literaturgeschichte der Araber, an extraordinary attempt to survey the literary history of the Arabs, with nearly 10,000 mini-biographies of Arab writers. Hammer-Purgstall also published in 1818 a Geschichte der schönen Rede-Kunste Persiens (History of Persian literary writing). F. Ruckert (1788–1866) and W. Pertzsch (1832–99) published an important study of Persian grammar and rhetoric entitled Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser (Gotha, 1874), and in 1887 Hermann Ethis published

Die höfische und romantische Poesie der Perser. Alfred von Kramer (1828–89) wrote several important works about Islamic culture and philosophy, including Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams und Kulturgeschichte des Orientis unter den Kalifen (Leipzig, 1875–7).

One of the greatest names in German Islamic studies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and is very much in the great academic tradition. Carl Brockelmann (1868–1956) was only 30 when he produced the first two volumes of his Geschichte der arabischen Literatur, an exhaustive reference work on all aspects of Arabic literature and Arabic literary scholarship. Altogether, five volumes were produced by Brockelmann, and the final one was not complete until 1942, by which time the author was 75. The Geschichte war truly the work of a lifetime, and earned Brockelmann international acclaim.

Other famous nineteenth-century German scholars include Aloys Sprenger (1813–93), who began his career at Leiden University with a dissertation entitled De originibus medicinae Arabicae sub Caliphatu (The Origins of Arabic Medicine under the Caliphate). Sprenger was one of the great travellers among the German Islamic scholars, and spent many years in India and the Middle East collecting valuable manuscripts. Edward Sachau (1845–1930) was a Professor at Berlin University and a specialist in Arabic philology. August Muller produced an important thesis on Arabian poetry. Much of his work was published privately in Königsberg. Martin Hartmann (1851–1918) spent nearly ten years in Lebanon at the German Consulate in Beirut. He travelled widely — to Egypt, Libya and Turkestan — and produced several books on the poetry and folks songs of the Muslim world. More importantly, he was among the first European scholars to appreciate the fact that Islam would be a force to be reckoned with in the future.2

The nineteenth century also witnessed the founding of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society) at Halle in 1845. Its journal, called Die Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, attracted as contributors many of the most prominent German Islamic scholars of the period. In 1898 there appeared Orientalische Literaturzeitung, published in Berlin and Leipzig. A characteristic of Germany during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been the wide geographical spread of centres of study and research connected with Islam. In contrast to France, where Paris was the pre-eminent centre, Berlin, although an important centre, was by no means the only one. A scholar like Carl Brockelmann could pursue his career with equal ease in Berlin, Breslau, Silesia, Königsberg in East Prussia and Halle in Saxony, all of which places had major collections of Islamic manuscripts and printed books. Other important centres were Leipzig, Hamburg, Munich, Tübingen and Heidelberg. This diversity reflects the strong regional basis of German scholarship, a diversification engendered by the political fragmentation of German society before 1871. Even after the unification of Germany, the regional centres continued to be active and play an important role in German Islamic scholarship.
As the twentieth century dawned, men such as Brockelmann and Noldke had given German scholarship a well-established international position. This was to be maintained. In 1910, the famous journal Der Islam started up, published in Strassburg (Strasbourg) by Becker; after the First World War publication was switched to Hamburg. In 1913, another important journal appeared for the first time, in Berlin. This was Die Welt des Islams (The world of Islam).

The early decades of the twentieth century saw some important new publications by scholars such as Richard Hartmann, who wrote on Sufism, Max Horten, who in 1910 published Indische Gedanken in der islamischen Philosophie, a study of the Indian ideas in Islamic philosophy, and Max Mayerhof, who produced Persisch-türkische Mystik (published in Hanover in 1921). Carl Brockelmann’s Die Literaturen des Ostens appeared in 1916. The years before the First World War also marked Germany’s only serious attempt to become involved in the Middle East, and for a brief while raised hopes in some German circles of increased political and economic influence in the Ottoman Empire. Germany decided to assist the Ottomans in the construction of the Baghdad railway. This act was perceived by Britain and Russia as a direct threat to their interests in Persia and India, and Germany came under strong pressure to abandon the project.

It was feared that Germany was now seriously beginning to flex its imperial muscles. The relationship between Germany and Turkey in this period led to an alliance during the First World War (1914–18), and the two countries went down together in defeat in 1918. It was a result of Germany’s increased political interest in the Ottoman Empire in this period that German scholars also began to take a greater interest in Turkish and Ottoman culture, and a number of them would take up residence in Istanbul or Ankara.

The humiliation of defeat in the First World War led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in the 1930s. This was to be a disaster for German intellectual life. Islamic studies were not to escape. Although scholars like Brockelmann continued to write and lecture (his book Geschichte der islamischen Volken und Staaten — History of Islamic Peoples and States — was published in 1939), the trend was against real intellectual enquiry and free thought.

Scholars who were seen as opposing the Nazi system were exiled; others were sent to brutal deaths in the concentration camps. The emphasis now was on what was termed Aryan scholarship, and libraries and research collections were regularly weeded of books and journals deemed to be non-Aryan in inspiration or content. It was difficult for Islamic studies to flourish in this environment. Among the scholars to perish in the Nazi terror was Fritz Wolff (1880–1943), who had dedicated his career to studying Persian literature, in particular the Shâh-nâmeh. His glossary to the epic poem was published in Berlin in 1936, and is considered one of the definitive reference works on the subject. He was murdered by the Gestapo in 1943.

The Second World War also wreaked destruction in other ways: air raids led to the disappearance of important oriental collections in many cities, including Dresden, Leipzig, Göttingen, Stuttgart and Jena. The Soviet advance into East Prussia and Silesia in January 1945 directly affected the important university libraries at Königsberg and Breslau, both of which had major collections of Islamic manuscripts. Most of these vanished in the bombardment and looting which followed the Soviet invasion. It is estimated that around 25 million books and manuscripts were lost in Germany in the Second World War, as well as several important library catalogues (including the subject catalogue of the Prussian State Library and the German Union Catalogue).

The Nazi era was a catastrophe for German Islamic scholarship. Library collections had been scattered and destroyed, and many scholars were either dead or in exile.

Germany itself was now politically divided, so that centres of Islamic scholarship such as Leipzig were now in the Democratic Republic of Germany, while Munich and Hamburg were in the Federal Republic. Other famous university cities such as Königsberg and Breslau were no longer German at all, the former renamed Kaliningrad and claimed by the Soviet Union, the latter renamed Wroclaw and assigned to Poland. Berlin reflected in microcosm the fate that had befallen the country of which it had been the capital: it was divided. Its most important library, the Prussian State Library, was in ruins, its collections scattered throughout Germany.

Since the end of the Second World War, Islamic scholarship in West Germany has made a remarkable recovery, reflecting the economic and political rehabilitation of the Federal Republic. In the East, recovery has not been as rapid, owing to the far more destructive loss of collections and universities in eastern Germany as a result of the war. West Germany’s great contribution to Islamic scholarship since the war has been the compilation of the sixty-volume Verzeichnis der orientalischan Handschriften in Deutschland (VOHD), which is a complete catalogue listing of all oriental manuscript collections in Germany. The project was begun in 1961 and still continues. Because of the strong federal nature of Germany there are several important centres for Islamic manuscript collections in West Germany. These centres include Berlin, Munich, Tübingen, Hamburg and Heidelberg.

The Prussian Cultural Foundation Library, West Berlin

The Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Foundation Library) in West Berlin is today the largest library in the city and one of the most important in West Germany. It was created in 1962, and moved into its present building in 1978. It is a direct descendant of the pre-war Prussian State Library, which was the largest library in Germany from its creation in 1918 until its destruction in 1945.

Before 1918, the Prussian State Library was known as the Royal Library, a title bestowed on it in 1701 by the Prussian kings. It was originally founded in 1661, when it was called the ‘Electoral Library’, as it served the Electors of
Brandenburg-Prussia. The present Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz therefore has a long and distinguished history.

From its foundation in 1661, the Electoral, later the Royal, Library grew rapidly. In the eighteenth century it was seen as a symbol of the Prussian Enlightenment, and Frederick the Great ensured that books covering all aspects of human knowledge and achievement were added to its collections. In the nineteenth century, the Royal Library became a symbol of the power and prestige of a strong, unified Germany. By 1873, it held one of the most important research collections in the whole of Europe, with over 640,000 volumes and 12,000 oriental manuscripts. In 1914, the Royal Library moved to its elegant new building on Berlin’s most prestigious avenue, the Unter den Linden. At its opening it was claimed to be the most beautiful library in the world.10

Germany’s defeat in the First World War did not affect the collections in the Royal Library. There was no physical destruction of the library buildings as was to occur in the Second World War. However, with the abolition of the monarchy and the declaration of a Republic the Royal Library was renamed the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek (Prussian State Library).

In 1919 an Oriental Department was created. This Department pulled together the various dispersed oriental manuscript and printed book collections held by the Staatsbibliothek and in two decades created one of the most important orientalist libraries in the world.11 By 1939 it had a collection of 21,812 oriental manuscripts, over half of which were Islamic. There were also 340,000 printed books either from or about the Islamic world. The largest collection was made up of Arabic manuscripts (numbering around 9,000), but there were also sizeable collections of Persian and Turkish manuscripts, as well as over 2,000 East Asian manuscripts (mainly from Thailand and Burma). The Oriental Department also contained important collections of printed books in archaeology, history, linguistics, literature and Islam. Many of these were in Arabic or Persian. Among the collections was a unique, nearly complete collection of Ottoman printed literature.

In 1941, as the air attacks on Berlin began to increase, it was decided to remove the oriental collections to places of safety outside the capital. They were stored in various parts of the country, including a potash mine. The great bulk of the Islamic manuscripts were sent to western Germany, and following the defeat of the Nazi regime they were not returned to Berlin but remained in the French and American zones of occupation. They eventually found their way to the University of Tübingen and a special library repository in Marburg. The destruction of the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek in the years 1943-45 was one of the great tragedies to befall German scholarship. The library buildings were virtually obliterated, and its important collections scattered or destroyed.

The valuable oriental printed book collections — including the unique archive of Ottoman printed literature — suffered badly when over 150,000 volumes in the Department were destroyed by fire bombs. The total stock loss of the whole Staatsbibliothek was on an even more Wagnerian scale. For the dedicated Librarian of the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek this was all too much. Hugo Andres Kruss, who had been Director of the Library for two decades and had helped spare its collections from some of the worst intellectual excesses of the Nazi regime, committed suicide in the ruins of his own library on 29 April 1945, as Soviet tanks rumbled towards the Brandenburg Gate and the Reich Chancellery.12

Following the division of Berlin between the Soviet Union and the other Allied powers, the ruins of the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek, which were located in the Eastern (Soviet) sector of the city, passed under the control of the German Democratic Republic. The name of the library was once again changed, this time to the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek (German State Library). When it came to reconstituting the pre-war oriental collections, the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek found that the West German government was unwilling to return the oriental manuscript collections which had been dispersed during the war, despite the fact that the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek considered itself to be the legitimate successor to the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek. In fact, of the original 21,812 manuscripts held by the pre-war Oriental Department, only 981 remain in its possession. Most of the other 20,831 were either destroyed in the war or are in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in West Berlin. There are also a few in Cracow, Poland.

Following the opening of the new building of the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in 1978, it was decided to transfer the oriental manuscripts from the depositories in Tübingen and Marburg back to Berlin. There they joined 1.7 million volumes from the previous Preussischer Staatsbibliothek, which had also been stored in what is now West Germany during the war.

Currently, the Oriental Department of the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz has a collection of 9,000 Arabic, 2,500 Persian and 3,500 Turkish manuscripts, as well as 50 Urdu, 250 Indonesian/Malay and 10 Swahili manuscripts.13 This means that it is certainly the largest Islamic manuscript collection in West Germany — and one of the largest in Europe. The 9,000 Arabic manuscripts constitute the single largest collection in any Western library after the British Library in London and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. This figure breaks down into 1,000 copies of the Qur’an, 2,000 prose and poetry manuscripts, 700 grammar and lexicology manuscripts, 600 law manuscripts, 800 history manuscripts, 500 medicine, astronomy and mathematics manuscripts, 700 Sufi manuscripts, 600 manuscripts on Hadith and 1,100 on Aqaid.14

Among the important Arabic manuscripts in the Staatsbibliothek’s collections are several thirteenth-century copies of the Kitâb marifa anwâlim al-hadîth by Al Sahrazuri, fourteenth-century copies of Al Hulâhî fî marifa al-hadîth, a study of the traditional sciences by al-Tayyibi, and an Ah 404 (AD 1013) copy of the Kitâb fî-tibb li-amal al-ğarîbîya of Abûl-Qasîm al-Zahrawî. There are also many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century copies of works by the great classical Arab writers, such as the historian Al-Tabari. It is estimated that over half the
manuscripts in the Staatsbibliothek’s collections date to before the seventeenth century, and the rest to the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The collection is particularly strong in fourteenth-century manuscripts, mostly from Iraq, Syria and Turkey. As we shall indicate in detail later in the chapter, the great bulk of the Arabic manuscript collection was built up in the nineteenth century.

The Persian manuscript holdings number around 2,500, and break down into 648 poetry manuscripts, 484 history manuscripts, 154 grammar and lexicology manuscripts and smaller numbers covering geography, astronomy, medicine and the traditions. Many of them date from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, although there are items from the middle years of the twelfth century AD. Among the important manuscripts is a copy of the Diwan of Sa’di, dated 30 Muharram AH 706 (AD 1329), a Diwan of Hafiz — richly illustrated in gold, red, blue, green and black with floral ornamentation — dated AH 995 (AD 1587) and an AH 1195 (AD 1780) copy of the A’la’ Kada of ADar. The Persian manuscripts contain many fine examples of miniature paintings, and a number originate from the Mughal courts of India. Among these is an exquisitely illustrated natural history manuscript, with fine full-colour illustrations of the bird and plant life of India, commissioned by the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir (1605–27). Many of the Persian and Indo-Persian manuscripts in the Berlin collection are renowned for their fine lacquer work covers.

The Turkish manuscripts, which now number 3,500, were mainly acquired in the twentieth century, and built up in the two decades preceding the Second World War. The Islamic manuscript academic interest in Turkey was very strong. The manuscripts break down into 576 poetry manuscripts, 476 prose manuscripts, 265 manuscripts covering Sufism, 129 dealing with grammar and lexicology, 115 on law, 94 on medicine, and others on such subjects as astronomy, mathematics, geography, cosmology and the Hadith. Among the most important Turkish texts is a seventeenth-century copy of the Tevarih-I Rodas by Nisani, an account of Sultan Selim’s attack on the Greek island of Rhodes in 1552, and a copy of the Muratt-i Tevarih by Sulaiman Sopi, a work which is an eighteenth-century rendering of the World History of Haji Khalifa. Most of the Turkish manuscripts date from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

The 272 Indonesian manuscripts are predominantly Malay and Javanese texts, and were acquired in the nineteenth century. They are mainly Islamic legal texts (covering land law, maritime law and local adat or customary law) and traditional tales, often based on Islamicized Hindu legends.

The manuscripts in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz date back to the early years of the Electoral Library in the mid-seventeenth century. The first Islamic items to enter the library originated from the private collections of the scholar and traveller Adam Olearius. These included copies of the Gulistan of Sa’di, which Olearius was responsible for translating into German. Olearius was adviser to the Duke of Holstein. At the court of the Duke, Olearius met Haqwiirdi, who was the Consul of the Shah of Persia. Haqwiirdi appears to have been very disillusioned by the low level of financial support which he received from the Shah, and as result decided to sell most of his Persian and Turkish manuscripts to Olearius. In addition, Olearius himself travelled to Persia, as an emissary of the Duke of Holstein to the Shah’s courts, and, inspired by the beauty of the manuscripts he had bought from Haqwiirdi, managed to return to Holstein with several more. Most of these were eventually bought for the Electoral library.

In 1677–9, 29 Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts which had been acquired by Theodor Petreaus entered the Library’s collections. Petreaus was Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Königsberg in Prussia. These manuscripts were all acquired as a result of an expedition which Petreaus undertook to Turkey and the Levant, under the direct patronage of the Danish King Frederick III (1648–70). Although the Electoral Library in Berlin eventually bought Petreaus’s manuscripts, there is no evidence that the Prussian monarchy had any real interest in or commitment to studying Islamic religion and culture in the way that the Danish monarchy was already doing and would continue to do well into the nineteenth century.

The next major acquisition of Islamic manuscripts came in 1691, when the personal library of the orientalist scholar Christian Rau — more popularly known as Ravius — was obtained by the Electoral Library. Rau was a Professor at Frankfurt an der Oder, and a well-known oriental scholar. He travelled extensively in Europe buying up collections of Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts. He studied at the University of Leiden, then Protestant Europe’s leading centre for oriental languages and literature, and along with Theodor Petreaus and Adam Olearius was among the most influential German-speaking Islamic scholars of his day. His brother Johann Rau was Librarian of the Electoral Library, and on Christian’s death hastened to acquire his private papers and books. It is not known exactly how many manuscripts were included in this purchase but estimates put the number at between two and three hundred.

By the early years of the eighteenth century the Islamic manuscript collections were therefore well established. The eighteenth century was a lean period in the development of the collections and very little material of any importance entered the Library. Although the Royal Library (so named since 1701) flourished in many other areas, owing to the patronage of Frederick the Great, there was no specific attempt made to develop the Islamic collections. This would have to wait until the nineteenth century, when German scholarship in the subject of Islamic studies would be reflected in the emergence of important collections in the Royal Library. In 1817, the first major acquisition since Rau’s 1691 collections entered the Library. These were the Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts of Heinrich Friedrich Dize (1751–1877). Dize was a Prussian Consul to the Ottoman court between the years 1784 and 1790. He was an inveterate bibliophile, and during his years in Istanbul set about acquiring as many manuscripts as he could.
afford. He was fascinated by Islamic religion and culture and became a leading oriental scholar. He was an example of the German Enlightenment which embraced such figures as Kant, Hegel and Schiller. He was a close friend of Goethe (1749–1832), whose great book on the East, Westöstlicher Diwan, appeared in 1819 only two years after Diez’s death. Following his retirement from the Prussian consular service in 1790, Diez made his home in the Pomeranian coastal town of Kolberg, where he became a prominent civic figure and continued to build up his library of books and manuscripts. He was often visited by Goethe.

When Diez died in 1817, his library of 17,000 books and 856 manuscripts passed to the Royal Library. Among the manuscripts were over 100 volumes of Arabic texts and a large number of Turkish manuscripts. Many of the Turkish items acquired by the Royal Library in the nineteenth century originated from Diez’s collection. Among these were interesting examples of the Seljuk–Mongol school of Turkish art and calligraphy. Persian manuscripts included some fine sixteenth-century copies of the Hamza of Nizami and the Hamza of Amir Husran. Most of these copies are beautifully illustrated. Diez was the first in a line of great nineteenth-century German collectors of Islamic manuscripts.

In 1822, a collection of 30 Persian manuscripts belonging to General Johann Heinrich von Minutoli reached the Royal Library. Von Minutoli had led an unsuccessful scientific mission to Egypt between 1820 and 1822. This mission, conceived in the spirit of the earlier Danish expedition, foundered owing to lack of adequate financing. However, von Minutoli acquired a valuable collection of over 300 Arabic and Persian manuscripts, all of which eventually reached the Royal Library — the first group in 1822 and the second between 1861 and 1864.

In 1881, the Library bought part of the collection of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815–82). Wetzstein was Prussian Consul in Damascus from 1848, and his collection of Arabic manuscripts was eventually split between the Royal Library in Berlin and the University of Tübingen Library. The manuscripts purchased in 1851 numbered 193, in 215 volumes, and all of them dated between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. More will be said about Wetzstein later in the section on the University of Tübingen’s collection.

A second purchase, of 1,934 Wetzstein manuscripts, was made in 1862. This was the single largest acquisition of Arabic manuscripts made by the Royal Library, and reflected the growing confidence and interest being displayed in Prussia in Islamic studies.

Between 1853 and 1857 the Royal Library acquired 732 Persian and Arabic manuscripts belonging to Julius Petermann, who since 1837 had been Professor of Oriental Languages in Berlin. Petermann, in addition to being an outstanding academic, was a keen traveller, and in 1852 set out for Syria and Persia. His journey lasted three years, and during this time he sent back a large collection of Arabic and Persian texts. A second journey between 1867 and 1868 to Palestine and Syria resulted in the Royal Library acquiring another

Petermann collection of 150 manuscripts in 1870. Among the items obtained by Petermann is an Ah 966 (AD 1559) copy of the thirteenth-century astronomy text al-Hamadani entitled Risba latifa Jihim al-haiya, some fine early Maghrebi copies of the Qur’an in Kufic script and a large number of beautifully illustrated Persian manuscripts, including an early-nineteenth-century copy of Qazwini’s ‘A‘lib al-mahliya wa garib al-managhadat with 416 miniature illustrations.

In 1857, the Royal Library bought the Aloysi Prenger collection (1813–93). This is one of the Royal Library’s most important acquisitions in the nineteenth century. It is worth examining in some detail. Sprenger’s collection is collectively known as the ‘Bibliotheca Orientalis Sprengariana’ and includes Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts. The bulk of this is made up of 1,240 Arabic manuscripts. Sprenger was one of Prussia’s leading Islamic historians, and spent thirteen years in the East between 1844 and 1857. He first travelled to Delhi, where he became Director of one of the city’s most important Madrassahs. In 1847 he was appointed — by the East India Company’s administration — as a special assistant to the British Resident in Lucknow for the purpose of cataloging the royal libraries of the kings of Oudh. His instructions read: ‘You need not confine yourself exclusively to the King’s libraries but you can undertake, as opportunity offers, the examination of some of the best private collections in that city [Lucknow], which are supposed to contain many rare and valuable works.’

Sprenger stayed in Lucknow nearly three years, and helped by his Indian assistant, Ali Akbar, he examined over 10,000 volumes of Arabic, Persian and Hindustani manuscripts, eventually producing a catalogue of the royal collections which was first published in 1854. After leaving Lucknow, he set off on a series of journeys all over the Middle East. He went to Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Oman, and eventually reached Berlin seven years later. About this period he wrote:

I visited every library, public or private, to which I could obtain access. I examined every book I could lay hold of. I spared no expense to secure a good manuscript, and if I met with a rare work, which I could not obtain by purchase, I had it copied and carefully compared, and I had agents in various parts of the country through whom I obtained books, even from Makkah and Madinah. Sprenger’s collection of Islamic manuscripts is indeed formidable. He himself considered that it was one of the most representative collections of Islamic literature ever brought to Europe, and wrote that ‘there is no branch of learning which has ever been cultivated by Muslims, of which it does not contain the leading works of reference’. He believed that Western nations would be unable properly to understand the Islamic world unless they too took the opportunity of studying Muslim literature in the original languages. In this connection he worked throughout his life on writing histories of the Muslim world based on original source
materials. Among the most famous of these are his life of Muhammad from original sources, published in India in 1851, Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed, Die alte Geographie Arabiens, published in Bern in 1873, and the history of Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznah, published in Delhi in 1847.

Sprenger’s admiration for Islamic literature and learning was, however, tempered by a certain sense of intellectual arrogance. He wrote in 1856: ‘the literature of the East deserves to be cultivated . . . [but] it contains few facts, if any in astronomy, medicine, mathematics, natural history or any other science which are new to us.’ What he did believe, passionately, was that the Islamic intellectual experience could contribute positively towards enriching man’s view of himself and his place in the world. He also believed — as did many nineteenth-century European scholar-collectors — that manuscripts in the East were no longer valued, and that it was the duty of people such as himself to preserve what they could. He wrote:

Oriental nations are no longer able to take care of their own literary treasures. No value is placed on old books, and their destruction therefore proceeds with great rapidity. Every man who finds an opportunity ought to secure as many good books as he can.

Sprenger’s collection of 1,240 Arabic manuscripts — by far the largest part of his oriental library — is made up of 268 poetry manuscripts, 135 dictionaries and grammar texts, 124 legal manuscripts and 92 commentaries on the Qur’an, as well as several hundred manuscripts on the Hadith, on philosophy, biographical histories and works of historical criticism. His acquisition of medical and scientific texts is rather limited, numbering around sixty manuscripts. Among Sprenger’s important Hadith texts, which mainly date from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, are copies of the Kiraḥ marifa anwālm al badīḥ and the Alfiyya al-musammāt bi-taḥṣira wa-t tadkira fililm al badīḥ. Historical manuscripts include copies of works by classic authors such as Ibn Qutayba, Al-Muqaddasi, Al-Abi and Al-Wāqidi. One of Sprenger’s more unusual purchases was an early-thirteen-century astrolobe, with text and astronomical diagrams incised into the metal. This was produced in Toledo in Ah 420 (1229 AD).

Sprenger’s Persian and Turkish manuscripts were much smaller in number, reflecting the fact that he did not begin serious acquisition of manuscripts until after his travels in Arab countries. He did, however, purchase a number of Indo-Persian texts while in India, and Turkish manuscripts were available to him in Syria and Egypt.

In 1879 the Royal Library received its first major collection of South-East Asian manuscripts. This was due to one man, Karl Schoemann (1806–77), who between 1845 and 1851 worked in Java as personal tutor to the family of the Governor of Netherlands India. During his time in Java, Schoemann built up a collection of Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Buginese, Makassarese, Batak, Arab and Lampung manuscripts numbering 272 items. Many of the texts cover legal matters, usually relating to adat or customary law, but there are also a number dealing with Islamic theology (usually Malay texts written in Arabic script), literary tales, such as the Carita Mahara Jawa Ravana (History of the Kings of Ravana), in which Islamic and Hindu stories coalesce, and Javanese illustrated manuscripts on the adventures of Amir Hamzah. There also some interesting Buginese manuscripts including one on the heavenly journey of the Prophet Muhammad and manuscripts from Borneo on the history of the kings of Banjarmasin.

In 1882 the Royal Library acquired 663 Arabic and Turkish manuscripts from the private collection of the Scottish duke Alexander Hamilton (1767–1852). Hamilton was the son-in-law of the notorious William Beckford (1759–1844) and many of the Islamic manuscripts in his possession were originally acquired by Beckford.

Beckford scandalized the English society of his day. He constructed a bizarre Gothic-style palace in the Wiltshire countryside, totally rebuilding the original family mansion. There he was able to indulge his artistic and sexual fantasies, which soon earned him notoriety throughout the surrounding areas, and eventually further afield. Beckford was also a writer and achieved overnight success with his book Vathek, An Arabian Tale, which was published in 1786. This novel — which some claimed was based on an original Arabic manuscript — centred on the adventures of the Caliph Vathek, grandson of the great Harun al-Rashid. Beckford never visited the East himself, but through his interest in manuscripts and books constructed a fantasy world of the Orient which struck a chord in the public imagination.

In 1884, a collection of 1,035 Arabic manuscripts reached the Royal Library. These were the so-called Landberg manuscripts, named after Carlo, Count Landberg (1848–1924). Landberg was one of Sweden’s leading Islamic scholars, and he persuaded a Muslim scholar called Amin El-Madani to sell his library to Arabic manuscripts to the House of Bril. In 1884, part of this collection was bought for the Royal Library in Berlin on the advice of Landberg himself. The rest of the collections went to the universities of Princeton and Leiden.

Also in 1884, a collection of 30 Arabic manuscripts belonging to Edward Sachau was bought for the library. Sachau (1845–1930) was appointed a Professor in Oriental Languages at the University of Berlin in 1876. Three years later he was invited by the Prussian government to undertake a tour of Syria and Iraq, which he described in his book Tour to Syria and Mesopotamia, published in 1883. The manuscripts he acquired during his travels were given to the Royal Library in Berlin. Sachau’s expedition to Iraq and Syria was planned by a German government increasingly interested in the Near East. It would not be long before German economic and political interests would lead the country towards greater involvement in the Ottoman Empire and support for the Baghdad railway. Scholars like Sachau were often seen as pathfinders for greater economic and political expansion. Sachau himself went on to become one of Germany’s greatest Arabic philologists and was active in Arabic scholarship until his death at the age of 85 in 1930.
In 1887, 241 Arabic manuscripts were bought for the library on the advice of Edward Glaser (1855–1908). Glaser was a student of the orientalist August Muller (1848–92), and it was Muller who inspired Glaser with a deep and abiding interest in southern Arabia, in particular Yemen. Glaser went on four journeys to Yemen between 1882 and 1884, and became Germany’s premier expert on Yemeni manuscripts. All the items in the 1887 collection were obtained during his travels. It was while in Yemen that Glaser would meet Giuseppe Caprotti, the Italian trader whose large collection of Yemeni manuscripts would eventually be sold to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan.

The nineteenth century — particularly the latter half — was the great era of Arabic manuscript collection development for the Royal Library. The Persian and Turkish collections had grown more slowly. In the twentieth century, both the Arabic and the Turkish collections would continue to expand in numbers, the latter becoming of increasing importance as a result of German political and economic interest in the Ottoman Empire, and the Turkish Republic which followed it. Between 1900 and 1939, the Turkish manuscript collections increased sixfold.

In 1912, shortly before the Royal Library moved to its new premises in the Unter der Linden, the Arabic and Turkish manuscripts of Martin Hartmann were acquired. Hartmann (1851–1918), who worked at the German consulate in Lebanon between 1876 and 1887, was a free spirit in what could at times be the heavy and ponderous world of nineteenth-century German Islamic scholarship. He took the opportunity of living in Beirut to travel extensively throughout Syria and Palestine and involve himself in the popular culture of the region. He was the first person to produce a study of the Arabic folksongs of Syria (Volkslieder aus Syrien), and later he travelled to the Libyan deserts, where he compiled a collection of popular songs, entitled Lieder der libyschen Wüste (Songs of the Libyan Desert). Hartmann was completely free from traditional academic approaches to his subject and as a result produced writings and studies that were fresh and vital, revealing aspects of popular Muslim culture which had often been overlooked or ignored by other scholars. Hartmann — unlike many of his contemporaries, who believed that Islam was only of interest as a historical force — believed that Islam had direct relevance to the lives of Muslims everywhere and that it would emerge again as a great popular movement. His researches and interest extended throughout the whole Islamic world, and he studied many of the Islamic languages, including Kurdish and Eastern Turkish.

It was during this period that he began to build up his important collections of Arabic and Eastern Turkish manuscripts, which were eventually to be acquired by the Royal Library. Hartmann’s sociological interest in Islam was considered dubious by German scholars. He had no real following among his contemporaries, the majority of whom were locked into a much more academic approach to Islamic studies. In his books, Der Islam: Geschichte, Glaube, Recht (Islam: History, Beliefs and Law), published in 1909, and Fünf Vorträge über den Islam (Five Reports on Islam) published in 1912, Hartmann tried to approach the study of Islam from as wide a base as possible, looking at the political, social and cultural factors influencing Islamic societies. This approach met with a good deal of support in France, where Hartmann was acclaimed as one of the great masters of Islamic studies. In Germany, however, he was not permitted even to lecture at the University of Berlin until 1910, so great was the resistance to his ideas and approaches.

In the 1920s the Royal Library — now named the Prussian State Library (Preußischer Staatsbibliothek) — greatly expanded its Turkish collections. This was mainly due to the efforts of German scholars such as Oscar Rescher and Helmut Ritter, who were both resident in Istanbul at that time. The peak period for Turkish manuscript acquisition was the years 1921–9. It was during this period that the important archive of Ottoman printed literature was built up. This was largely destroyed in the Second World War.

Oscar Rescher (1883–1972) first came into contact with Turkey in the years preceding the First World War. He had studied Arabic under Professor Fischer at Leipzig, and after the war became a lecturer in Arabic at the University of Breslau in Silesia. In 1925 he left for Turkey, where he became Professor of German at the Turkish military academy in Istanbul.

Between 1925 and 1933, Rescher acted an official agent for the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek and obtained many Ottoman Turkish manuscripts for the library, helping greatly to increase the size of the Oriental Department’s holdings in this field. In 1937, he was stripped of his German nationality by the Nazi Party because of his Jewish ancestry. He became a Turkish citizen and died in Istanbul. His personal collection of 206 Turkish and 382 Arabic manuscripts was acquired by Yale University in 1972.

Another important collection of Turkish manuscripts acquired by the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek was also made in 1927. This was part of the private library of the French scholar Clément Huart (1854–1926). Huart was an Ottoman specialist, author of several important studies on Ottoman literature, including Notices des livres turcs, arables et persans imprimés à Constantinople durant la période 1294–1296 H (1877–1879).

In 1941, the last major acquisition of Arabic manuscripts was made by the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek. This was the library of Rochaid Dahdah (1818–89). Dahdah was a scholar of Lebanese origin, and had built up a collection of over 300 manuscripts and 430 printed books. In early 1942, a collection of 60 Javanese manuscripts was bought through the firm of E. J. Brill in Leiden. At this point in its history, the Oriental Department of the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek held the largest single collection of Islamic manuscripts in the entire Western world. But now the air raids were beginning to strike at Berlin and the collections were dispersed throughout Germany, never to be completely reconstructed.

In the years since the Second World War, and following the creation in 1964 of the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, which managed to reassemble most of the collections, there has been a steady growth in acquisitions. Around 1,500 Arabic and Turkish manuscripts have been
Stephan Roman

acquired through agents in Egypt, Syria and Turkey, and this process continues. The catalogues to the Staatsbibliothek's collections are numerous. The great series of catalogues of oriental manuscripts produced in the late nineteenth century by the Royal Library was entitled Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. The Arabic manuscripts were listed in ten volumes, and catalogued by Wilhelm Ahlwardt (1829-1909). Ahlwardt devoted twenty years of his life to the task, the first volume in the series appearing in 1887 and the final one in 1899. They were published under the collective title Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. The Persian manuscripts were catalogued by Wilhelm Pertsch and published in 1888 under the title Verzeichnis der persischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin.

The Turkish manuscripts catalogue appeared a year later in 1889 and was also edited by Wilhelm Pertsch. Malay manuscripts were covered by a catalogue produced by the famous Dutch Islamic scholar, Christian Snouck Hurgronje, which was published in 1889 and entitled Katalog der malaisischen Handschriften der Königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Berlin.

In the twentieth century, there have been several important catalogues published. The most comprehensive have appeared in the series Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland (VOHD). In this series have appeared four volumes on the Staatsbibliothek's Turkish manuscripts (volume 1 by Barbara Fleming, volume 2 by Manfred Gotz, volume 3 by Hanna Sbornweide and volume 4 by Manfred Gotz; the first volume appeared in 1968 and the fourth one in 1979). There is also one volume of Kurdish manuscripts by Kamal Faud, published in 1970. There have also been published a large number of specialist catalogues on particular collections in the library. These include catalogues of Persian illuminated manuscripts and Indian bookbindings, as well as catalogues such as Hans Overbeck's Malay Manuscripts (in the Prussian State Library), published in the journal of the Malay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society for October 1926, and Martin Hartmann's Die ostasiatischen Handschriften der Sammlung Hartmann which appeared in MSOS for 1904.

The Staatsbibliothek also has a collection of printed books in all the major Islamic languages. There are over 11,000 Arabic, 7,000 Persian and 10,000 Turkish books, as well as several thousand in Urdu, Pushu, Kurdish, Malay and Indonesian. These collections mainly cover religion, law, language, literature, history and geography.

The important pre-war collections of printed books were severely depleted in the air raids and subsequent fires of 1942-5, but have gradually been replenished in certain subject areas. There continues to be an active printed books acquisition policy for the Staatsbibliothek.

The Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

The Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek) is the largest library in the city. It was originally known as the Königliche Hof- und Staatsbibliothek (Royal Court and State Library), and was founded by Albert V of Bavaria (ruled 1550-79). The library was strongly supported by Albert's successors, and enriched by several important collections, including that of Johann Jacob Fuggers (1516-75). In 1634, following the fall of Tübingen to the armies of the Bavarian rulers, collections of the entire city library of Tübingen were incorporated into the Munich library. In the early nineteenth century the library was further enriched by the sequestration of 150 monastic and religious collections. Throughout the nineteenth century, the library continued to expand. In the Second World War it was badly damaged in air raids and lost 500,000 volumes. Currently, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has a collection of nearly four million volumes.

The Oriental Department of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has the largest collection of Islamic manuscripts in West Germany after the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, and its earliest acquisitions date back to the mid-sixteenth century.

Currently, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has a collection of 2,846 Arabic, 468 Persian and 428 Turkish manuscripts. There are also smaller collections of Javanese (44), Malay (11), Urdu (7) and Pushu (22) manuscripts.

Total holdings of Islamic manuscripts number over 4,000. The private library of Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter (1506-77) forms the ground stock of the Islamic collections in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. This library — apart from many early printed books — included one Persian, forty-nine Arabic and seven Turkish manuscripts. The Arabic manuscripts were mainly acquired from North Africa (Morocco and Tunisia), and among them are some very fine copies of the Qur'an. They date from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.

Widmannstetter was a noted humanist and one of Germany's first oriental scholars. He was born in Ulm in 1506, studied in Tübingen under the German humanists Sebastian Munster and Boniface Umerbachius, and from there proceeded to Italy. It was in Italy that he first began to learn Arabic and to study the Qur'an. Following this he took service as Secretary to Cardinal Nicholas von Schönberg, who was the Ambassador to the Papal court of the Emperor Charles V. Charles V was the last Habsburg Emperor to seek the restoration of the medieval ideas of universal kingship. In this he had the support of many of the great humanist scholars. Widmannstetter now began a diplomatic career, which took him on journeys through most of Europe. It was during this period that he established a close friendship with Duke Ludwig of Bavaria. Widmannstetter, building on his early knowledge of Arabic and the Qur'an, took the opportunity afforded him by his diplomatic contacts to acquire manuscripts in Arabic, mainly from Morocco, and he subsequently produced a number of books on Muslim religion, including an attempt to try to explain the main beliefs of Islam, entitled Mohammedis theologica dialogo explicata. In 1557, while on a visit to Regensburg, he died. His library of 500 printed books and 300 manuscripts was obtained by Duke Albert V of Bavaria.
(1528–79) and formed the initial stock of the Duke's new library in Munich. This was a major acquisition, because Widmannstetter was considered to be one of the great German humanist scholars of his day.

The next important acquisition of Islamic manuscripts took place in 1571, when a collection of five Arabic manuscripts belonging to Johann Jakob Fugger (1516–75) was made by Duke Albert. Fugger was a member of the wealthy Augsburg banking family, which rose to prominence in the fifteenth century by underpinning the finances of many of the German princes. The Fugger, through their extensive banking operations, had trading contacts in the Near East, and as a result were able to acquire manuscripts from the Ottoman Empire. Many of the manuscripts in the Fugger Library were in Hebrew.

The interest of Duke Albert V in Islamic manuscripts and books was not maintained by his successors. On the Duke's death, the Royal Library in Munich was one of Europe’s leading centres for oriental and humanist studies, with the private collections of Widmannstetter, Fugger and the Florentine philosopher Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) having been acquired. Thereafter, the acquisition of oriental manuscripts and books dropped sharply.

In the seventeenth century very few new Islamic manuscripts were received. The only ones that did arrive came in 1686, as a result of the Turkish wars. The Turkish wars ravaged central and eastern Europe between 1683 and 1699, and Bavarian troops were fully involved in supporting the Austrians against the Turkish armies. In 1686, Bavarian soldiers captured the Turkish garrison town of Ofen and brought back a small collection of Turkish and Arabic manuscripts. They included a Qur'anic text engraved on brass. These were all added to the Royal Library.

In 1782, the secularization of the monasteries led to the acquisition of a small number of Arabic and Persian manuscripts, including several copies of the Qur'an, one of which had originally belonged to Père La Chaise, the father confessor of the French King Louis XIV.

It was the nineteenth century that the real growth in Islamic manuscript collections began. In 1841, nine Arabic manuscripts acquired by the French physician Antoine Barthélemy Clot were received by the Royal Library. More popularly known as Clot Bey, he was an extraordinary figure who flourished under the patronage of the Ottoman viceroy in Egypt, Muhammad Ali (1769–1849). Appointed as chief physician, he went on to establish a medical school for Egyptian doctors, a nursing college (to which were admitted Ethiopian and black African girls) and a pharmacy school. Following a cholera epidemic in Cairo, during which he saved many lives, he was rewarded with the title Bey by a grateful Muhammad Ali. His manuscripts, which are now in the Munich collection, were acquired in Cairo and date from the early nineteenth century; they mainly cover medical subjects. In 1856/7 a collection of 51 Arabic and Turkish manuscripts was given to the library by a Bavarian doctor resident in Egypt, Franz Pruner (1808–82). He was also popularly known as Pruner Bey, and lived in Egypt until 1860, when he had to leave owing to increasing ill health.

Both the Clot Bey and the Pruner Bey acquisitions were made at a time when the Royal Library was embarking on a new policy in relation to Islamic manuscripts and printed books. It was decided that a much more systematic approach had to be taken in relation to the collecting of oriental materials. This policy closely coincides with the increasing interest being shown in German academic and scholarly circles in Islamic studies and Islamic manuscript collections.

In 1829 the Arabic-language scholar, Gustav Flügel, had visited the Royal Library not expecting to find very much of value, but had been amazed by the ‘treasures of which the library can justly be proud’. As a result he stayed on longer than he had planned in order to catalogue the manuscripts.

In the spirit of the new development of the collections that was planned, the Director of the Royal Library, Karl Halm (1809–82), embarked on a policy of deliberate purchase. This was to arouse in certain circles a great deal of controversy, but the results were spectacular. Halm's efforts resulted in a major increase in the size of the Royal Library’s collections, especially the Islamic ones.

Halm was a professor in Old Philology, Rector of the Max-Gymnasium in Munich and, after 1857, Director of the Royal Library. Within a few months of taking up his new post he had made a bid for the collections of the scholar Dr Aloys Sprenger. Sprenger's manuscripts included many interesting Indian Muslim texts. Halm travelled to Heidelberg to meet Sprenger, thinking that a deal had been agreed, but discovered that he had been outbid by the Royal Library in Berlin. He was furious, and there was a raging argument between the two scholars. However, Sprenger felt under no obligation to accept Halm's lowered bid, and the entire collection went to Berlin. A year later, in 1858, an even more glittering prize appeared. The French oriental scholar Étienne-Marie Quatremère (1782–1857) had died, and his important collection was offered to Halm, if he could raise the required fee. There were 600 Arabic and 166 Turkish manuscripts in the Quatremère collection.

Quatremère was an important figure in early-nineteenth-century French Islamic studies, and translated both the History of the Mameluk Sultans and the Description of Egypt by the Arab author Al Maqrizi. Halm knew therefore that Quatremère's manuscripts would be worth acquiring, and he was determined by whatever means to raise the necessary funds to purchase the collection. The methods he adopted to do so raised a storm of protest in Bavaria, and embroiled him in a considerable amount of controversy. He decided that he would auction duplicate copies of printed books held by the library. Since one of the items that came up for auction was a copy of the Gutenberg Bible, the storm that broke out was perhaps predictable. The State Parliament of Bavaria called a special session to debate the auction, and it was finally decided to suspend it. However, Halm had made his point, and funds were approved for the purchase of the Quatremère collection.

Halm's policy was maintained by his successors. In 1890, the Royal Library acquired about sixty manuscripts from the collection of the Munich oriental
scholar Ernst Trumpf (1828–85). Trumpf had spent some years in India and bought manuscripts in the newer Indian languages such as Pushtu, Baluchi and Punjabi. In 1901, the Royal Library received what is now known as the Glaser collection. This consisted of 157 Yemeni Arab manuscripts acquired in Sana'a by Giuseppe Caprotti, an Italian merchant. Most of Caprotti's manuscripts were bought by the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, but 157 were acquired by the German scholar Edward Glaser, who passed them on to the Royal Library in Munich. Although the collection which went to Milan is much larger and more comprehensive than the one purchased by Glaser, there are none the less some interesting items in the Glaser collection.

Among the texts is a copy of an early medical treatise (AD 694–96) by Sultan Yusuf bin Umur bin Rauf and copies of histories by al-Maqrit. The manuscripts mainly cover history, grammar, medicine, poetry and astronomy. The Nazi era, with its grotesque elevation of Aryan culture, was a difficult period for the Oriental Department of the Library. There was constant interference in the purchasing policy of the Department, and in 1938 a valuable collection of Indian manuscripts which the Library had acquired was sent back on the orders of the local Nazi supervisor of culture and education.

During the Second World War, although the Library buildings were damaged in air raids and some of the printed book collections lost, the Islamic manuscripts were saved in their entirety. After the war, acquisition of manuscripts continued under the management of the able scholar Emil Gratzl (1877–1957), who gave his entire collection of 101 Persian, Turkish and Arabic manuscripts to the library.

The earliest catalogue produced for the Islamic collections was a handwritten catalogue entitled Catalogus librorum Arabicorum, Syriacorum et Chaldir. This appears to have been compiled around the year 1859. Fortunately 200 years later there has been no new edition, reflecting doubtless the general lack of interest in this subject area following the death of Duke Albert V. But in 1808 Joseph von Scherer (1776–1829), an oriental scholar and Director of the Royal Library, produced two catalogues of the collections. Scherer had travelled extensively in Turkey and Persia and taught Persian on his return. In 1829 Gustav Flugel on his visit to Munich compiled what was considered to be the most complete catalogue up to that date. He fully described 217 manuscripts in the Royal Library collections.

However, it was under the directorship of Dr Karl Halm that a decision was made to produce the first comprehensive printed catalogue of the oriental collections. Joseph Aumer, a student of the oriental scholar Professor Marcus J. Muller, completed the first two volumes. The first volume covered 937 Arabic manuscripts and the second 351 Persian manuscripts. The first volume was published in Munich in 1866 under the title Die arabischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in Muenchen and the second in 1866 under the title Die persischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in Muenchen. Both carried forewords by Dr Karl Halm.

This was the last major cataloguing venture involving the Islamic manuscripts undertaken by the Royal Library, although in 1918 Emil Gratzl published a general survey of the Glaser Yemeni manuscripts. The Turkish manuscripts in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek have been catalogued in volume 43 of the Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland. Currently, it is estimated that through lack of personnel there are over a thousand oriental manuscripts in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek still awaiting cataloguing, as well as a hundred Persian manuscripts. In addition to its Islamic manuscripts the Staatsbibliothek also has an important collection of printed books in the main Islamic languages. Currently there are about 35,000 Arabic, 4,400 Persian and 12,300 Turkish books in the Oriental Department's holdings. There are also over 100,000 books published in the European languages about the Middle East.

The University of Tübingen

The University of Tübingen was founded in 1477. It is one of Germany's oldest and most respected universities. Islamic studies have a long tradition at the University and date back to 1521, when a Chair of Hebrew Studies was created at the University. Many of the early scholars who occupied the chair, however, took a special interest in the Arabic language, reflecting the close links in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries between oriental and biblical studies. In the eighteenth century, with the growing interest throughout Germany in oriental studies, it was decided to create a special Chair for the subject. This was the beginning of a long and distinguished orientalist tradition at Tübingen, which gathered momentum throughout the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century produced figures such as Christian Friedrich Seybold (1859–1921) and Enno Littman (1875–1958).

The Islamic manuscript collections at Tübingen consist mainly of Arabic, Persian and Turkish codices. Currently, there are estimated to be 350 Arabic, 133 Turkish and 112 Persian manuscripts in the university library. The collections date back to the early nineteenth century and were founded by Professor Heinrich Ewald (1803–75), who between 1838 and 1848 was Professor of Oriental and Theological Studies at the University of Tübingen. Ewald was also responsible for the first ever catalogue of the collections, which was issued by the Rector and Academical Senate of the University of Tübingen on 27 September 1839 and addressed to King Wilhelm of Württemberg. This was entitled Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Tübingen. The catalogue lists 42 manuscripts, including 12 Arabic, 7 Persian, 11 Indian and 8 Turkish and Tartar codices. The Arabic manuscripts include five copies of the Qur'an, two dealing with Islamic law and five covering language and literature. The Persian manuscripts include a Dastan of Hafiz.

The Turkish and Tartar manuscripts include a copy of the Indo-Tartar Babur Namah. The manuscripts which Ewald brought together came from a variety of sources, such as the collections of Balthasar Raith (1616–83),
collections of the former Preussischer Staatsbibliothek. These were all transferred to the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in 1978. Tübingen was spared the aerial destruction that affected many other universities in western Germany as a result of the British and American air raids, and its library collections emerged from the war intact.

Apart from its Islamic manuscripts, Tübingen also has a valuable collection of early printed books from Turkey. These are the printings of Ibrahim Müteferriqa and are the first books ever printed in an Islamic country. These books were published in Istanbul in the eighteenth century. Among them is a Turkish edition of Al-Jauhari’s Arabic dictionary and a copy of Wanswill’s Kitāb Targumut al-Sihah.

The State and University Library, Hamburg

The Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (State and University Library) of Hamburg was originally founded in 1479. Bürgermeister Heinrich Mummeter’s collection of books formed the basis of the library, and this was augmented in following years by the collections of many prominent Hamburg citizens, such as Joachim Jungius and Samuel Reimarus. In 1696, the city council of Hamburg passed a law by which a copy of every book printed in the city had to be deposited in the library. This led to a large increase in its collections over the next two centuries. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century the library continued to benefit from the acquisitions of private collectors, among the largest being that of the Wolf brothers. In 1919, a university was founded in Hamburg, and the library took on a dual role as both a state and university library. The Second World War was a disaster for the library and its collections. In July 1943 a major British air raid on Hamburg led to a destructive fire-storm in the heart of the city. Over 60,000 people died and most buildings in the centre were destroyed. Among these was the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek. It is estimated that 620,000 volumes — or 80% of the entire collection — were destroyed. After the war the library was gradually rebuilt, and it now has a collection of around 1.8 million volumes.

The Islamic manuscript collections number around 150 Arabic, 66 Persian and 60 Turkish manuscripts. Most of these date from before the war and survived, as they were moved out of the centre of Hamburg before the July 1943 fire-storms. Islamic manuscripts in Hamburg were collected by Protestant ministers or pastors such as Wilhelm Alard, Pastor of Süderau in Stormarn, and the theologian Sigismund Schellhammer, the brother of the city’s Librarian, David Schellhammer. In 1652 Alard gave the library a copy of a Moroccan Qur’an which he had acquired. In 1685 the Pastor of the Jacobische in Hamburg, Anton Reiser, donated a Turkish prayer book. These collections were firmly part of the North European Protestant tradition, as developed by the University of Leiden, and approached the study of oriental languages — particularly Arabic — from the perspective of biblical scholarship.
In 1739 an important collection of Islamic manuscripts reached the library. These were part of the personal library of Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739). Wolf was High Pastor of the Katharinenkirche, Hamburg. His collection of manuscripts had been built up over many years and included manuscripts which had belonged to the Pastor of the Hamburg orphanage, Johann Heinrich Morgenweg (1666–1730), and an earlier High Pastor of the Katharinenkirche, Abraham Hinckelmann (1652–95). Wolf had bought both these collections and incorporated them into his own library. Among Hinckelmann’s manuscripts were at least twenty Arabic texts, including copies of the Qur’ān and manuscripts covering legal matters. Hinckelmann had produced his own catalogue to the collection which he completed in 1694, a year before his death. In this he describes the basic characteristics of the items in his possession. Hinckelmann’s library also contained a small number of Persian manuscripts, which were also listed. Among the interesting manuscripts is one on astronomy by Ibrahim Ibn Yahya, and eleven copies of the Qur’ān. Similarly, the manuscripts of Joachim Morgenweg also contained a large number of copies of the Qur’ān. In 1738 Johann Christoph Wolf himself embarked on a catalogue of the manuscripts in his library, and finished this task only a few months before his death in 1737.

His brother Johann Christian Wolf (1689–1770), who was Professor at the Hamburg Academy and who became Librarian of the Staatsbibliothek in 1746, was also interested in Islamic manuscripts, and in 1749 bought the collection of the Frankfurt scholar Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach (1683–1734). The Islamic manuscripts came as part of the large general subject library which Uffenbach had built up and which was known as Die Bibliotheca Uffenbachiana. Thirty-two Arabic and Persian manuscripts were included in this library. Many of the manuscripts collected by Uffenbach are legal texts. Johann Christian Wolf, in his capacity as City Librarian, was also responsible for acquiring the oriental manuscripts of Paul Schaffhausen (d. 1761), who was a professor at the Academischen Gymnasium in Hamburg.

Several of the manuscripts which found their way to the Staatsbibliothek through the collections of Hinckelmann, Morgenweg, Uffenbach and Schaffhausen share a common origin. They originated from the library of the Imam of the Great Mosque at Buda in Hungary. In 1686, following the defeat of the Ottoman armies, German troops attacked Buda and captured the library of Suleiman Efendi. His manuscripts were eventually dispersed throughout Germany, ending up in private and state collections throughout the area. Several reached Hamburg, others went to the University of Königsberg and the Sachsen Landesbibliothek in Dresden.

At some point in the eighteenth century, Islamic manuscripts collected by Johann Friedrich Winckler entered the library. Several of Winckler’s manuscripts had once belonged to Golius, the famous seventeenth-century Dutch orientalist. It is thought that Winckler’s manuscripts were probably acquired during the period when Martin Friedrich Pitiscus (d. 1794) was Director of the Staatsbibliothek.

The nineteenth century saw the acquisition of several collections, the most important being those belonging to the General Superintendent of the province of Schleswig-Holstein, Jacob George Adler (1755–1834), who developed a keen interest in Islamic manuscripts after seeing a number on display in an exhibition, and Andreas David Mortmann (1811–79), who collected Turkish Ottoman manuscripts and eventually died in Istanbul. He was born in Hamburg, and fourteen of his manuscripts were acquired by the Staatsbibliothek in 1885, six years after his death.

Although the Hamburg collections are not large, there are several interesting items in the collections. Among the Arabic manuscripts are copies of the lexicon Asrār al-Adab waftihar al-Arab by Al-Baqūl, and some good examples of works by Abu Hātim al-Bustī. The Persian and Turkish manuscripts contain copies of several of the great classic poets, and there are examples of Eastern Turkish texts, such as the Diwān of the Timurid prince Shah Garib Mirza.

There are several early catalogues to the collections, including those by Wolf and Hinckelmann. However, the most comprehensive catalogue is that composed by Carl Brockelmann and published in 1908 under the title Katalog der orientalischen Handschriften der Staatsbibliothek zu Hamburg.

The State and University Library of Lower Saxony, Göttingen

The Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek is located in Göttingen in Lower Saxony, and was originally founded as the library of the University of Göttingen in 1734 by King George II of England, who was also Elector of Hanover. The library grew rapidly and benefited from the close connection with England, which ensured that many books published in England were also available in Göttingen. By the early nineteenth century the library had a collection of 200,000 volumes, and this figure had risen to nearly 500,000 by the end of the century. Although the library buildings were damaged in the Second World War, most of the stock — including the manuscripts — survived. The library now has a collection of 2.5 million books and has the dual function of being both a university library and a state public library.

The Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek has a small collection of Islamic manuscripts, numbering around seventy-two Persian, nineteen Turkish and seven Arabic manuscripts. Many of the manuscripts date from between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among the important texts are copies of Haji Kirmānī’s Gil va Nawrāt and Masnawi’s Humāy va Hamāyān. There is also an early-sixteenth-century copy of the Diwān of Rāyzi Samargandi. Most of these manuscripts were presented to the library in the early nineteenth century by Baron von Asch.
Some of the manuscripts belonging to the Frankfurt scholar Zacharias von Uffenbach also found their way to Göttingen, although the majority went to Hamburg. The manuscripts in the Göttingen collection are catalogued in the *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland (VOHD)*, volume 56.

**The University Library, Heidelberg**

Heidelberg University Library also has a small collection of Islamic manuscripts. The University was founded in 1386, and was supported by the Electors of the Palatinate. By the late sixteenth century, the Bibliotheca Palatina was one of the most richly endowed libraries in central Europe, and the University had an enviable reputation as one of the great German academic centres. Heidelberg was also increasingly being recognized as one of Europe’s important centres for Islamic studies. The sixteenth-century scholar and mystic Guillaume Postel presented the Elector Palatine with manuscripts which he had collected on his travels in Istanbul, Syria and Palestine, and these formed the foundation of Heidelberg’s collections. Further donations would follow, from scholars such as Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), who was known for his great interest in Arabic and Persian literature. In the early seventeenth century Jakob Christmann (1554–1613) was appointed the first Professor of Arabic at the University of Heidelberg.

However, tragedy was to strike both Heidelberg and its famous library. In 1620, the Protestant alliance of Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate, was defeated by the armies of the Catholic League. The destructive horror of the Thirty Years’ War had begun. Heidelberg was invaded, and its library was dispersed. The bulk of the collection — 3,542 manuscripts and over 5,000 printed books — was sent to the Vatican Library (Bibliotheca Apostolica) in Rome. Among these were the Islamic manuscripts of Postel and Casaubon, which were never returned to Heidelberg. In 1693, a fire destroyed the remaining library collection and most of Heidelberg itself.

It was not until the eighteenth century that the University Library was rebuilt and a serious attempt made to restore the collections. By the nineteenth century Heidelberg had once again established itself as an important academic centre. The town escaped aerial bombardment during the Second World War, and its pre-war library collections therefore survived intact. Currently it has about 1,500,000 volumes and 6,000 manuscripts, among which are 67 Arabic, 41 Persian and 92 Turkish manuscripts.

The majority of Heidelberg’s Islamic manuscripts were acquired in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and include the Trubner collection. The Trubner family established an important publishing business in Heidelberg, and were famous for the oriental texts which were issued under their imprint. During the nineteenth century the family collected several valuable Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts, all of which were donated to the university library. The Heidelberg Islamic manuscripts have been catalogued in the *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland (VOHD)*.

**Other West German Collections**

There are several other collections of Islamic manuscripts in West Germany. The Staatsbibliothek in Marburg has a collection of 147 Arabic, 86 Persian and 35 Turkish manuscripts. These are all new acquisitions, made since the Second World War. The Badische Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe has a collection of 114 Ottoman documents, which are associated with the career of Othman Pasha, who became Governor of Egypt in the nineteenth century. The documents are mainly personal letters and account books. There are also a number of Arabic and Persian manuscripts in the Karlsruhe collections. Small collections of Islamic manuscripts are also be found in the Kassel Landesbibliothek, Kiel University Library, Mannheim Stadtbibliothek and Erlangen University Library.

**Manuscript Collections in the GDR**

It is not the aim of this chapter to consider Islamic manuscript collections in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), but a brief mention will be made of the principal collections held there and of those in the pre-war German territories of Silesia and East Prussia (since 1945 ceded to the USSR and Poland).

One of the principal centres for Islamic collections in the German Democratic Republic is the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in East Berlin. This is considered by the German authorities to be the successor to the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek. The Islamic manuscripts in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek number only a few hundred. The majority of the pre-war collections of Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Mughal, Malay and Javanese manuscripts are now in West Berlin. There are also about 80,000 printed books in Islamic languages in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, barely one-fifth of the 1939 collection. Both Islamic manuscripts and printed books are located in the Asien-Afrika-Abteilung (Asia-Africa Department), which is one of the seven departments of the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek.

The Sachsische Landesbibliothek in Dresden has a collection of about 140 Arabic, 80 Persian and 272 Turkish manuscripts. The Sachsisches Landesbibliothek was badly damaged in the Dresden air raids of 13–14 February 1945, and over 450,000 books and manuscripts were destroyed. The Islamic manuscripts survived, as they had been moved to a safe location outside the city before the raids.

The library of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society) in Halle contains a collection of around 136 Arabic, 70 Persian and 15 Turkish manuscripts. The Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft was founded in 1845 and very quickly became the most important
learned society in Germany specializing in oriental studies. The Islamic manuscripts in the library of the DMG in Halle belonged to scholars such as Martin Hartmann, H.L. Fleischer, Blau and Soch. Leipzig was a famous centre in pre-war German Islamic studies. It was home to many important scholars, including August Fischer (1865-1949), who was prominent in the study of Arabic philology and grammar. Before the war, Leipzig was also an important centre for German academic publishing, and many important texts relating to Islamic scholarship were published there. Its principal collections of Islamic manuscripts are to be found in the Leipzig Stadtbibliothek and the Leipzig Universitätssbibliothek. The Stadtbibliothek has a collection of 366 Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts, while the Universitätssbibliothek has a collection of around 900 Arabic, 100 Persian and 49 Turkish manuscripts. Leipzig University Library was founded in 1543, and grew to prominence in the nineteenth century. By the time war broke out in 1939 the library could claim to be one of the most important in Germany, with over two million books and 8,000 manuscripts. Heavy bombing in 1945 destroyed many of the buildings, although most of the collections survived intact. Many of the Islamic manuscripts in the collection of the Universitätssbibliothek originally belonged to Martin Hartmann. They mainly date from the nineteenth century.

Two important pre-war Islamic collections, which have now largely vanished, are those of the University of Königsberg in East Prussia and the University of Breslau in Silesia. Königsberg had been a major centre for Islamic studies since the seventeenth century. It was here that Theodor Petraeus was Professor of Oriental Languages in the 1670s, and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the University of Königsberg was noted for scholars like Carl Brockelmann. During bitter fighting in April 1945 when the Soviets advanced into eastern Germany, the city was largely destroyed. The University collections disappeared, and have never been recovered. The great orientalist tradition of Königsberg has now been lost for ever. The city is currently in the Soviet Union and has been renamed Kaliningrad.

The University of Breslau was similarly an important centre for Islamic studies. Brockelmann was attached to the Department of Arabic, as was Oskar Rescher, the Turkish scholar. There were important collections of Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts. Between January and May of 1945 Breslau, as the capital of Silesia, became a focal point for German resistance to Soviet advances from the east. Much of the city was destroyed in aerial bombardment and ground artillery attacks. The university library was burnt out. Most of the collections of Islamic manuscripts and printed books were destroyed. Only a few now survive in the reconstituted collections of the University of Wroclaw (as Breslau has been renamed since it became part of Poland).

Today German relations with the Muslim world are of considerable importance. The Federal Republic has developed powerful economic links with the Middle East and Turkey, and there is also a sizeable Turkish minority in Germany. Islamic studies and scholarship therefore continue to flourish. There are important institutes for the study of Islamic languages, literature and civilization in a number of West German universities, including Göttingen, Hamburg, Bonn, Giessen, Munich, Tübingen and Heidelberg. There are regional study centres in Middle Eastern and South East Asian studies, often attached to universities. The University of Heidelberg, for example, has an important Institute for South East Asian Studies, while there is an important Institute of Oriental Studies in Giessen, and an Institute for African Studies in Hamburg. There are also a large number of learned societies and research institutions specializing in the Muslim world. Among these are the Deutsches Orient Institut (German Oriental Institute) in Berlin, the Institut für Turkestana Forschung (Institute of Turkistan Research) in Cologne and the Institut für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften (Institute for the History of Arab Islamic Science) in Frankfurt. The famous pre-war Islamic Museum of Berlin is now located in East Berlin. In the German Democratic Republic, Islamic Studies are to be found at universities in Leipzig, Halle and Berlin. Current German scholarly publishing on the Muslim world continues to reflect the strong academic tradition that has been such a characteristic of German Islamic studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Among the major German periodicals are the Ztschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (Journal of the German Oriental Society), Der Islam, Die Welt des Islam and the Orientalische Literaturzeitung.

The two German states — both the Federal and the Democratic Republics — are the inheritors of a long and distinguished tradition of scholarship concerning the Islamic world. The collections of Islamic manuscripts now in German libraries are a testament to the strong academic interest that Germany has always shown in Islamic language, literature and civilization. Despite the destruction of the Second World War, and the division of Germany, that scholarly tradition continues to survive, and has earned for Germany a highly appreciated role in the development of academic links between Western Europe and the Islamic world.

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