The United States and Canada

This collection [of Islamic manuscripts] will help to lift the veil of ignorance which has hitherto hid the face of the East. Likewise, it will aid in removing the smoke of materialism which has disfigured the likeness of the West. Then East and West shall see each other face to face, and seeing each other, recognize that they are brothers.

Nabih Amin Faris, 
Princeton University Library Chronicle, April 1940

Islamic manuscript collecting in North America is a comparatively recent phenomenon. No major collections were formed until the mid-nineteenth century, and the few manuscripts that were brought back before then usually ended up in small private collections. This pattern of development very much reflects the limited interest which both the United States and Canada took in the Islamic world until the twentieth century. There were, of course, good reasons for this. North America was, until the advent of modern travel and the growth of US economic and military power, largely isolated from the Muslim world. There was no impetus or reason for North Americans to become involved in the affairs and culture of countries such as Egypt, Persia or India. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, North Americans were engaged in the task of defining their own national identity, taming the western frontiers, and developing their own economic and industrial power. There was little energy left to look outside.

What interest there was in the Islamic world was closely tied to biblical scholarship, very much sharing the seventeenth-century European Protestant tradition of England and The Netherlands. Anglo-Saxon North Americans did not carry with them to the New World any of the folk memories of the Spanish, where the ferocious destruction of the Aztec and Inca Empires recalls the spirit of the Reconquista and the annihilation of Moorish civilization in Spain. Early US scholarship and study of the Muslim world was conducted in the spirit of biblical enquiry and classical rationality. Islam evoked no demons or ghosts, and was far enough removed in geographical and political terms not to demand any critical change of approach in American Islamic scholarship until well into the twentieth century. This contrasted sharply with the British, Dutch and French traditions, which underwent profound changes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries owing to the development of those countries’ imperial responsibilities in many parts of the Muslim world. The United States and Canada, when they did begin to come into closer contact with the Muslim world, therefore had very little original scholarship of their own to draw upon, and relied heavily on the northern European tradition, as developed in the nineteenth century. It has been argued by writers like Edward Said that the United States in particular is the inheritor of the nineteenth-century European orientalist tradition, and many of the theories and attitudes towards the Islamic world developed by nineteenth-century orientalists like Dozy, Hurgronje and de Sacy are in fact still to be found in present-day United States attitudes to the Muslim East.

Early contacts between North America and the Muslim world were largely made by merchants, travellers and missionaries, and there was very little official government or diplomatic contact. The arrival in New York of an ambassador from Oman in the 1840s caused something of a mild sensation throughout North America, and he was treated as if he were Ali Baba stepping out of the pages of the Arabian Nights. Knowledge of Islam was confined for most of the nineteenth century to a small circle of scholars and travellers located on America’s East Coast seaboard, and there was virtually no general perception of or interest in the Muslim world outside this small circle. In 1842, the American Oriental Society was founded in order to promote scholarship and study of the non-European world. The American Oriental Society was to develop very much in the tradition of the famous European oriental societies, and to take its interests and lead from them. Since North America had no direct political and economic involvement in the Muslim world, this was not surprising. At the opening meeting in 1843, John Pickering, the AOS’s first President, declared that ‘the objects of the Society are to cultivate learning in Asiatic, African and Polynesian languages, and in everything concerning the Orient, to create a taste for oriental studies in this country, to publish texts, translations and communications, and to collect a library.’ This the American Oriental Society successfully achieved. It is the forerunner of the many universities and research institutions in the United States today which are now closely involved in the Muslim world. The Journal of the American Oriental Society, published regularly since 1843, was the first journal to cater specifically for North Americans with a scholarly interest in the East. Its emphasis — like that of the Oriental Society itself — has been on the historical, literary and archaeological aspects of Islam. One prominent scholar in nineteenth-century American Islamic studies was Edward Elbridge Salisbury (1814–1901), Professor of Arabic at Yale University from 1841 to 1901. He was to bequeath nearly 100 Arabic manuscripts to Yale University on his death.

Direct political contacts between the United States and Muslim countries were minimal in the nineteenth century. At the turn of that century there had been two punitive expeditions against the Barbary pirates (in 1801 and again in 1815) in order to prevent the harassment of American ships in the Atlantic.
But these were isolated episodes, with no further developments. Later in the nineteenth century, the United States saw fit to station consuls throughout the Muslim world in order to protect American traders, missionaries and travellers — men like R. P. Walters of Salem, Massachusetts, who was Consul of the United States in Zanzibar in the 1840s, and who built up a collection of Arabic manuscripts. These developments, however, were not the prelude to any attempt to develop stronger political links with the Islamic East. The United States still saw itself as a zealous upholder of the rights of free peoples everywhere to resist colonialism and foreign domination, and in this mood did not envisage for itself any direct administrative role in the affairs of Islamic countries, as did Britain or France. The Monroe doctrine, developed in order to protect the Americas from foreign domination, had a profound influence on the way the Americans saw their role in the world. However, as the nineteenth century drew to its close, the United States began to flex its economic and political muscles. In 1893 the Hawaiian islands were brought under direct United States control. In 1898 war broke out between Spain and the United States, a war which resulted in Spain losing the last remnants of its once-great colonial empire. Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines all passed under US political administration. As the twentieth century dawned, the stage was set for the extraordinary expansion of American power and influence in the world, an expansion that would bring the United States and the Islamic world into a direct and often difficult relationship.

Yet even at the turn of the century all this was still very much in the future. Americans were still seen by many Muslims as outside the traditional Western attempt to control the Islamic world. In 1911, for example, the Persian government — unaware that the Russians and the British had already agreed on the territorial division of Persia — engaged an American adviser called Morgan Shuster to help reorganize the country’s finances. But all Shuster’s efforts to put the Persian economy on a sounder footing were wrecked by Anglo-Russian non-cooperation. Shuster abandoned his attempts and left the country angry and embittered. His book *The Strangling of Persia* exposed what he saw as the cynical machinations of European colonialism towards independent Muslim nations.

Outside the political arena, contact between the United States and the Islamic world was based on scholarly and religious grounds. American Christian missionaries were active throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in the Middle East and India. In 1866, Presbyterian missionaries established the American University of Cairo and Robert College in Istanbul. These universities were not only centres for promoting American Christian values, but were also viewed as offering to the local population a good academic education in the arts and sciences. Consciously or otherwise, they created the intellectual climate among the educated intelligentsia which helped nurture Arab and Turkish nationalistic movements. The universities at Beirut and Cairo both exist to this day, despite all the vicissitudes that American–Arab relations have undergone in the last thirty years: a tribute to the sound and enduring values on which they were based. Throughout the nineteenth century, there was also a small stream of American travellers who journeyed to the Muslim East in search of new horizons, whether literary or artistic. Writers such as Herman Melville and Mark Twain travelled to Palestine, in the footsteps of biblical characters. They did not compare in numbers, nor indeed have the impact, of their European counterparts men like Nerval, Kinglake, Lane and Flaubert — but their writings none the less helped to open the minds of their fellow Americans to the fact that the Muslim world did exist and was not confined to the fantasies of Scheherazade and *The Thousand and One Nights*. Beginning in the later decades of the nineteenth century, they were joined by a new breed of traveller. These were the ‘collector barons’ — men with large amounts of money to spend, and an interest in Islamic culture from an artistic and collector’s point of view. These were people like Charles Lang Freer, founder of the Freer Gallery in Washington, who built up collections of Islamic art (ceramics, metalwork, manuscripts) which he presented to the Smithsonian Institute in 1920, Alfred Chester Beatty (whose collections ended up in Ireland), William Camac, the benefactor of Pennsylvania’s Islamic collections, and John Frederick Lewis, whose collections passed to the Newberry Library in Chicago. These men were not necessarily Islamic scholars themselves, but had an eye for items of artistic quality and often commissioned others to collect on their behalf.

In the years following the First World War, the United States was poised to move into a direct political and commercial relationship with the Islamic world. American interest in the Middle East began to grow stronger. In 1931, Charles Crane, an American Quaker millionaire, met Ibn Saud, the ruler of Arabistan, in Jeddah in order to persuade him to allow exploration of the peninsula’s mineral resources. Crane was convinced that a glittering future lay ahead for the newly created desert kingdom, based on oil, and wanted to gain the first concessions to exploit the mineral resources available. Ibn Saud agreed. Crane commissioned a civil and mining engineer called Karl Turchall, who carried out an extensive survey of the Jeddah, Al-Rass, Al-Hassa and Dhahran areas, before concluding that the geological formations around Dhahran pointed strongly to the possibility of large oil reserves. Ibn Saud sent the report to the British government, who turned down the offer to invest in oil exploration. It may be that this was not entirely out of disinterest, but because the British were keen now to involve American commercial and political interest in the Middle East and saw this as a good opportunity to do so. On 29 May 1933, the Standard Oil Corporation of California signed an agreement with Ibn Saud whereby the Company took out a sixty-year lease on the Al-Hassa (Dhahran) region, based on an initial interest-free loan of £50,000 and royalty payable on four shillings per ton of crude oil extracted. At this stage, no one, particularly not Ibn Saud, could have envisaged the vast wealth that was to flow out of the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. After the Second World War, the export of crude oil rose sharply, so that by the late 1970s Saudi Arabia was one of the richest countries in the world. The Americans
were as a result firmly drawn into the economic and increasingly complex political web of Middle Eastern affairs.

Saudia oil was not the only reason for this greater involvement, however. After the Second World War, it also became very clear that the established European colonial powers — Britain, France, The Netherlands — could no longer sustain their previous imperial roles. The British left India in 1947, the Dutch were driven out of Indonesia in 1949, the French out of Algeria in 1962. Throughout the Muslim world, there was an upsurge of independent, post-colonial government. The Sudan became independent in 1956, Malaysia in 1957, Nigeria in 1960, and the overthrow of the pro-Western regime in Iraq occurred in 1958. The diminishing role of Britain and France meant that a power vacuum was being created. It was into this vacuum that both the United States and the Soviet Union now stepped. Although neither of them would adopt the system of direct colonial rule, both would be closely involved in many aspects of previous colonial government — close economic involvement in the affairs of Third World countries, military support and sometimes direct political interference.

The arrival of the United States as a world power took many people by surprise, not least the Americans themselves. For over two hundred years, they had learnt to see their country as a young, newly arrived nation, which had gained its freedom fighting one of the old, established European colonial powers. American sympathies had traditionally lain with the newly emergent nations seeking to establish their own freedoms. Americans prided themselves on having no colonial past to besmirch their history and their role in the world. The annexation of Hawaii and the occupation of the Philippines were not events which gave the majority of Americans any sense of imperial angst. Suddenly, in the 1950s and 1960s, the United States found itself occupying an increasingly important role in world affairs, and having to develop, for the first time, a serious policy for dealing with Muslim countries.

There was in these early post-war years very little independent Islamic scholarship for the United States to draw upon in formulating such a policy. We have already commented upon the fact that American scholars relied heavily on well-established European traditions and attitudes. It was to this tradition that Americans first turned in their attempts to understand the Muslim world.

Islamic studies was well established at several American universities — notably Princeton and Yale — and there was a Professorship in Arabic Studies at Yale which stretched back to the early part of the nineteenth century. However, the emphasis in academic programmes at these centres was very much on traditional areas of Islamic scholarship, linked closely to archaeology, and theological (principally biblical) studies. The US government decided in the 1940s and 1950s that there was a need to create a more contemporary approach to Islamic studies. Consequently, a major programme of investment and expansion was embarked upon, both to strengthen scholarship and research at the older institutions, such as Princeton, and also to develop new study programmes in subject fields and geographical areas previously not covered. It was during this period that many of the important centres of Islamic scholarship that are now famous both in the United States and in the Muslim world were developed. In 1946, the Middle East Studies Association was established; in 1957, the University of California, Los Angeles, founded the Von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies; in 1961 the University of Michigan established the Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies. At Princeton, Professor Philip Hitti ensured an important lead for his Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures. Hitti, who was a refugee from Nazi Germany, had arrived at Princeton in the 1920s, and with the new climate of interest in the Muslim world helped steer Princeton into a position of paramount influence in relation to American Islamic studies. At Harvard, Sir Hamilton Gibb became Director of the prestigious Center for Middle East Studies in the mid-1950s, and Gustave Von Grunebaum took up an important role at University College, Los Angeles. Centres for area studies were established in universities and institutes across America, Middle or Near Eastern programmes were created or strengthened in places such as Brandeis University (New York), University College, Los Angeles, Harvard, Michigan (Ann Arbor), Portland State College, Princeton, Texas (Austin), Utah (Salt Lake City) and Yale. South-East Asian and Asian/Indian studies were set up in Claremont Graduate School, Columbia University, Cornell, Hartford Seminary, Kansas (Lawrence), Minnesota (Minneapolis), New York University, Oregon (Eugene), Princeton, Texas (Austin), Yale and Hawaii (the East/West Centre, which developed a strong area specialization in Indonesia). The Ford Foundation has, since the 1950s, also played an important role in supporting Islamic studies both inside and outside the United States. It was through the support of the Ford Foundation that the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) of North America was established in 1966.

There is no doubt that the traditional orientalist Islamic scholarship that characterized American academic institutions in the period up to the Second World War has now been largely superseded by the study and research into subjects more closely related to contemporary American needs vis-à-vis the Muslim world. There is a strong emphasis on politics, economics, modern history and religion as psycho-cultural determinants of behaviour, less on classical literature and archaeology. Today, interest in the Islamic world is widespread in American government and business circles. American studies regarding Islam, as they exist today, are geared towards providing some of the answers to what is increasingly seen as a religious and cultural system at odds with America and the West.

The collecting of Islamic manuscripts in the United States reflects the varied threads that make up the weave of America’s changing relationship with the Muslim East. The first manuscripts to reach America arrived through the efforts of private collectors such as William Bentley (1759-1819). Bentley epitomized the scholarly elite of the East Coast seaboard which flourished in
the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He was Pastor of the East Church at Salem in Massachusetts between 1788 and 1819, and was also a noted classics scholar. He took an interest in Arabic and Persian, and was used by the government in Washington to translate official documents from Arabic into English. The most notable case of this was when the accreditation papers of the new Tunisian Ambassador to the United States were sent to him for translation. He was in correspondence with many of the prominent scholars and senior government officials of his day, including Presidents such as Adams, Jefferson and Madison. Bentley was closely involved, for example, with Thomas Jefferson’s plans for establishing the University of Virginia. He appears to have obtained his Islamic manuscripts directly from the Islamic East.

In a letter dated 14 February 1804 and addressed to one Captain Henry Elkins, he requests his help in ‘gaining curious articles in Asiatic and foreign countries’. Among the items he listed for Captain Elkins — who was presumably sailing to the Middle East — are histories of Africa, Asia and Yemen, and ‘an Arabic manuscript of the Koran, in the Arabian Naskh or Persian Ta’dih character’. Bentley’s manuscripts passed on his death to the American Antiquarian Society, but now appear to have vanished. Other private collections — such as those of R. P. Walters, the US Consul in Zanzibar — passed into the care of organizations like the American Oriental Society.

The first public collections were built up in the nineteenth century by institutions on the East Coast, such as Harvard, Yale and Hartford Seminary. It would not be until the twentieth century that the other major collections of Islamic manuscripts presently held in the United States began to develop, and this reflected America’s growing interest in the Middle and Far East. Today, the largest and most important collections are those at the University of Princeton in New Jersey, the University of Michigan, Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, the Library of Congress in Washington, the University of California at Los Angeles, Yale University in Connecticut and Harvard University in Massachusetts. Other smaller, but notable, collections include those of New York Public Library, the National Library of Medicine in Maryland, the Newberry Library in Chicago, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the University of Philadelphia and Columbia University libraries. Besides these, there are another fifty or so institutions, ranging from the Boston Athenaeum to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which have collections of between one and ten manuscripts. Taking into account the recent arrival of the Unites States to the field of Islamic manuscript collecting, it is remarkable that so many valuable collections have been built up over what is in effect only a century of serious collecting.

Washington

Library of Congress

The Library of Congress was founded in 1800 when the Congress was transferred to Washington, D.C. A small collection of 3,000 volumes at its inception in 1814, it has grown to become one of the largest libraries in the world, with around 18 million books and 32 million manuscripts. Originally created in order to serve the needs of the Congress, it has now taken on the role of a national library, and also plays an important international role, through support for its own cataloguing and classification systems, which have now been adopted throughout the world. The African and Middle Eastern division of the Library of Congress has one of the largest collections of Islamic printed books and periodicals in the West, covering all the languages of Islam from Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu through to Swahili, Malay and Javanese. It has probably the most comprehensive international collecting programme of any library in the world today, and maintains representative offices in many overseas countries which are responsible for its regional acquisitions programmes. Among the printed books held by the Library are those from the famous collection of the Arabic scholar and bookseller, Bernhard Moritz. This contains over 1,816 items dealing with every phase of Islamic civilization and culture. Many of the titles are today almost unobtainable and therefore constitute a highly valuable resource. The Moritz collection was acquired for the Library in 1948. Many important Arabic books are also to be found in the collections. These include a copy of one of the most beautiful books ever printed in the Near East — Tahâ Husayn and Abd al-Wahhab Azzam’s edition of Ibn al-Muqaffa’s Arabic translation from Pehlevi of the Kulliyya wa-Dinnah, published in Cairo in 1941, with illustrations by Strekalovsky of old manuscript miniatures. In contrast to the collections of printed books, the Islamic manuscript collections of the Library of Congress are not large, although there are some valuable items. The collecting of original Islamic manuscripts has never been a priority for the Library of Congress, and it has always concentrated on printed materials.

The total number of Arabic manuscripts held by the Library is estimated to be between 1,307 (Thomas Martin’s estimate6) and 1,549 (Gurgis Awad’s estimate). There are also small collections of Persian manuscripts (70 items) and Turkish manuscripts (100 items), as well as a few Malay and Urdu manuscripts. The majority of the manuscripts originate from the library of Sheikh Mahmud al-Inam al-Mansuri, who was a teacher at the Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo. The collection was acquired by the Library in 1945. According to Pearson it contained 5,000 volumes, of which 1,400 are manuscripts. Apart from eight Persian and fourteen Turkish texts, the Al-Mansuri manuscripts are all in Arabic. The collection was procured in June 1945 through the efforts of Dr Charles R. Watson, retiring President of the American University in Cairo, and Dr Edwin E. Calverley of the Hartford Theological Seminar. The manuscripts bought from the Sheikh’s library include texts on religious law, history, literature, grammar, poetry, theology and philosophy. The material is considered to be of high quality, and this is largely due to the fact that the Sheikh personally selected the manuscripts through contacts in India, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, North Africa and Europe.

Apart from the library of Sheikh Al-Mansuri, which constitutes the single
most important collection of Islamic manuscripts acquired by the Library of Congress, there were also some valuable Arabic and Persian texts donated by Kirkor Minassian in the 1920s and 1930s. Minassian was a New York art and antique dealer of Armenian origin, who acquired during the course of his business deals some Arabic manuscripts which illustrate a wide range of calligraphic styles, including Naskhi, Kufi, Maghribi, Diwani, Farsi and Ruq'a scripts. Among the manuscripts is an early-nineteenth-century (AH 1241/AD 1825) copy of Al-Fatiha, the Muslim ‘Lord’s prayer’, in Naskhi script, by Ali Rida, and some beautiful examples of eastern Kufi and Thuluth script, usually verses from the Qur'an. Many of Minassian’s manuscripts are in fact illuminated copies of the Qur'an, but he also presented two Turkish firmans, and a family tree of Shihab al-Din tracing his descent from Qub al-Din Timur Kurkan.

Among the more unusual items received by the Library of Congress in recent years are a grain of rice and a grain of wheat on which have been inscribed various short Arab proverbs. These were sent by Muhamed Tahir al-Kurdi, Professor of Arabic Calligraphy in the Ministry of Public Education in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, to the Librarian of Congress. In a covering letter dated 11 Rabi' II AH 1364 (25 March 1945), he wrote ‘I am honoured to send you a grain of wheat and a grain of rice on which I have written with my own hand. Please place them in the Library of Congress. . . . that they may become a perpetual remembrance in my name on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in America, the New World, the land of wonders and the source of the arts; and that they may also be a symbol for the contact between the East and the West’. The year in which the grain of rice and wheat were received at the Library of Congress marks a turning point in America’s relations with the Islamic world. From 1945, the United States was to be the pre-eminent Western power involved with the countries of the Muslim East. A new chapter in the contact of Islam and the West was to begin. It is almost symbolic that this was acknowledged in Arabic script on a grain of rice and wheat sent from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Muslim country with which the United States would be most deeply involved over the next thirty years.

There are still no published catalogues to the Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscript collections at the Library of Congress. Various typed lists of the collections are available, but no official catalogues have been issued. In 1969 Salah al-Din al-Mumajjied issued a Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Near Eastern Section of the Library of Congress. This was published in Arabic by a Beirut publisher. In 1984 a listing of the Arabic manuscripts in the Library was issued by an Egyptian, Dr Abd al-Fattah al-Hilu. This is available in a loose-leaf, typed format.

The Malay manuscripts held by the Library of Congress number about eight. It seems that the manuscripts were obtained by an American missionary called Alfred North who was working in Malaysia in the first half of the nineteenth century (1830-45). According to Pearson, they are of special interest to Malay scholars because they appear to have been copied by

Abdullah ibn Abdulhadi, who was an outstanding early Malay scholar of Malay literature. There are also some early-twentieth-century administrative writings in Arabic from the Philippines which originate from the district of Sulu, and were issued by the Sultan of Sulu, between the years 1901 and 1914. This was the early period of American rule in the Philippines.

National Library of Medicine

Also in the Washington area is the National Library of Medicine, now located at Bethesda, Maryland. The Library was created in 1956 by an Act of Congress. It has its origins in the Library of the US Army Surgeon-General’s Office, which was originally founded in 1836 to serve the needs of the military medical corps. Today, the National Library of Medicine is the world’s largest medical research library, and is particularly famous on the international scene for its production of Index Medicus (published since 1879). This is now available on-line to libraries throughout the world.

The Islamic manuscripts at the National Library of Medicine currently number 137. This figure breaks down into 100 Arabic, 28 Persian and nine Turkish manuscripts. All of them cover medical subjects, and among them is a rare eleventh-century copy of al-Razi’s famous medical encyclopedia Al-Hawi fi al-Tibb, (dated AH 487/AD 1094). Although the number of manuscripts in the NLM collection is not large, there are several items which have been described as ‘real library treasures’.

The first Islamic manuscripts to reach the Library did so on a sporadic basis in the early 1930s. There was no systematic acquisition plan. The manuscripts were obtained because they dealt with medical subjects, rather than because there was any specific interest in Islam or Islamic texts per se. In 1940, however, the Library acquired its most significant collection, and one which gave it for the first time a claim to have an important archive of Islamic manuscripts. The Librarian of the Army Medical Library, Colonel Harold W. Jones (1877-1958), decided to buy 63 volumes of Arabic and Persian manuscripts. He paid US $4,000 for the collection (the total acquisition budget for the Library at that time was only US $21,184, so it was a major investment). The manuscripts were sold to Colonel Jones by the orientalist scholar, Abraham S. Yahuda. In his enthusiasm for his newly acquired manuscripts, Jones wrote to the Chairman of the American Library Association Board of Resources on 29 November 1940, stating that ‘the manuscripts represent the entire development of Arab Medicine from Rhazes in the 10th to the 19th century . . . and the collection is unique since there is no similar one in America’.

In 1962, a smaller collection of Arabic medical manuscripts was acquired by the Library from Dr Lutfi M. Sa'di, an amateur scholar of Islamic medicine. The manuscripts held by the National Library of Medicine have been studied in detail by Claudius P. Mayer, who produced the first annotated list of the Yahuda/Jones manuscripts. Mayer believed that many in the West —
particularly in the medical profession — underestimated the debt that was owed to Islamic Arab medicine, and that there was a tendency to deride the contribution of the Arabs in this field because ‘linguistic difficulties made the science of the Arabs a closed and mysterious book’.

In 1952, Schullian and Sommer published their catalogues of incunabula and manuscripts in the Army Medical Library. These list all the Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts acquired up till 1948, listed alphabetically by title.

Among the NLM’s most important manuscripts is a commentary on Hippocrates’ The Nature of Man, by the physician Ali ibn Ali al-Hazm al-Qarshî (1209-88), copied by the physician Abû al-Fâdîl ibn al-Hasan al-Kâtîb (dated AH 668 AD 1269). The manuscript explains the balance within each human being of the four natural elements — fire, air, water and earth — and how it is important that these are kept in perfect harmony.

Another important manuscript held by the Library is the Arabic translation by Hubaysh ibn al-A’sam of Galen’s medical text The Usefulness of the Parts of the Body. Galen’s writings had a great influence on the development of Arabic medicine, and were widely translated and copied throughout the Muslim world. The copy in the NLM dates from the fourteenth century.

Medical manuscripts from Muslim Spain also feature in the NLM collection, including a famous text by Mahâdhîdhat al-Dîn al-Ansârî, copied in AH 669/AD 1270, while the author was still alive. Al-Ansârî’s manuscript relates to the subject of theriacs or antidotes to poison, a popular theme in both Greek and Islamic Arab medicine.

The oldest manuscript in the NLM collection is Razî’s medical encyclopedia Al-Hâwî fi’l-Tibb, a monumental study of Arabic, Greek, Indian and Persian medical knowledge, together with Razî’s own observations on medical treatment. The Al-Hâwî became so famous that it was translated into Latin in 1279 (known as the Liber continens) and a printed version appeared in Italy in 1486. The copy in the NLM is dated AH 487/AD 1094 and was owned by an Iraqi family resident for many generations in the Shia holy city of Al-Najaf before passing to the United States in 1940.

Other noteworthy manuscripts held by the Library include Ibn Sina’s Al-Qârin fi’l-Tibb, a five-part text covering the full span of Ibn Sina’s medical knowledge, including the human anatomy, fevers and acute diseases, and the various treatments available, a fourteenth-century copy of Ibn al-Âyn Zarbî’s Al-Ka瘠 fi Sinâ’at al-Tibb, and a copy of Al-Tilmîd’s Al-Aqrâbâdhim. Al-Tilmîd was a prominent twelfth-century Baghdad physician, the author of sixteen works on medical science, and the Director of the great Muslim hospital Adiût, in Baghdad. The Library also has works by the Afghan doctor, Al-Samarqandi, murdered in 1222 when Herât was sacked. Al-Samarqandi anticipated the late-twentieth-century obsession with healthy eating and exercise, and many of his manuscripts in the NLM collection reflect his keen interest in subjects such as correct diet, and ways of avoiding illness through eating correct and sensible foods.

### The United States and Canada

#### Freer Gallery

The Freer Gallery in Washington, now part of the Smithsonian Institute, also has a small collection of Islamic manuscripts. The Gallery was founded in 1906 by Charles Freer, an enthusiast for the study of the Orient. By 1923 the Gallery had 24 manuscripts, and since then the number has risen to about 50, as well as several hundred leaves illustrating Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Mughal art. The Mughal illustrations are particularly noteworthy.

#### Princeton

The Islamic manuscript collections of Princeton University Library rank as the most important in the whole of North America and among the finest in the world. Princeton is located in New Jersey, on the United States East Coast. The University was founded in 1746 as the College of New Jersey, but a fire in 1802 destroyed its first library. Established again in 1805, the Library has now grown to be one of the largest in the United States, and is famous for its many specialist collections, including its Islamic manuscript holdings.

The Library possesses around 8,600 Arabic, 370 Persian and 336 Turkish manuscripts. The majority of the manuscripts were bequeathed to Princeton University through the generosity of Robert Garrett, both a graduate and a trustee of the University. They were obtained from a variety of sources, but are collectively known as the Garrett Collection of Arabic and Islamic Manuscripts.

In 1899, two years after graduating, Garrett travelled to Syria as a member of the first American archaeological expedition to Syria. Up till this point, there was nothing to indicate that the Muslim world was where his interests would lie. If for anything, he was known for his athletic skills and prowess. He had represented the United States at the newly restored Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, and won a double crown of wild olive for winning the sixteen-pound shot and the discus throw. But it was to be Islamic manuscripts rather than athletics that would excite his lifelong interest. While in Syria with the archaeological expedition, Garrett came into contact for the first time with Arabic and Turkish handwritten manuscripts, and was struck by the great beauty and delicacy of the script and illustration. From this time originated his quest for manuscripts, which was to turn Princeton into the greatest centre in North America for Islamic collections and studies.

Garrett’s bequests of Islamic manuscripts fall into two main sequences. The first comprises manuscripts obtained from four different sources: those bought from E. J. Brill in The Netherlands (often referred to as the Houtsma or Al-Madani Collection), the Barudi Collection, the Widgery Collection, and what is known as the Miscellaneous Collection. The second important sequence is the collection that Garrett bought from the orientalist Abraham Shalom Yahuda (1877–1951). Together these two sequences form the overwhelming majority of Islamic manuscripts held by Princeton University. A
third sequence, referred to as The New Series, comprises some 1,626 Arabic manuscripts acquired by Princeton in the period 1955–82.

Garrett began collecting manuscripts for the first-sequence bequest (what is known as the original Garrett Collection) soon after his return from Syria in 1889. In this first-sequence collection there are estimated to be around 4,500 Arabic manuscript titles, 154 Persian and 35 Turkish.

Garrett’s first purchase was in 1900, from E. J. Brill in The Netherlands. It is a collection of Arabic manuscripts, sold to Brill in 1883 by an Arab scholar from the Holy City of Madinah called Amin ibn Hasan al-Hulwání al-Madani al-Hanafi. Al-Madani had travelled to Amsterdam in 1883 in order to take part in the ‘Colonial Exposition’ being held there. This collection is often referred to as the Houttsma Collection, after the Dutch orientalist Dr M. Th. Houttsma, who published a listed catalogue of it entitled Catalogue d’une collection de manuscrits arabes et turcs appartenant à la maison E. J. Brill à Leyden (Leiden, 1889). 23

In 1904, Garrett purchased a second group of manuscripts from Al-Madani’s collection. Brill sold the remaining manuscripts not bought by Garrett to the Royal Library in Berlin and to Leiden University. The German orientalist Enno Littmann, who was then based at Princeton, completed a catalogue of the two Al-Madani collections, which Garrett had by now deposited with Princeton University. This was published in 1904.

The third bequest to enter Princeton did so in 1925, when Garrett bought 420 manuscripts belonging to Murad Bey Barudi, who was a graduate in pharmacy from the American University of Beirut. Barudi’s manuscripts are almost entirely in Arabic and his collection had been built up over a large number of years and was carefully chosen. Garrett called upon Professor Hitti (of Princeton University) to act as his agent and to examine the manuscripts, and it was on his recommendation that they were bought.

The fourth Garrett bequest to Princeton, also obtained in 1925, was a collection of manuscripts, mainly Persian, from Professor Alban G. Widgery, then working at the University of Cambridge. Widgery had bought the manuscripts, when in India, and most of them originate from the areas around Ahmadabad.

The final group in what has become known as the original Garrett Collection is a miscellaneous number of Arabic manuscripts, acquired by Garrett at different times and from different places. They include some very fine Qur’anic codices.

The Islamic manuscripts acquired by Garrett during the period 1900–25 reflect the extraordinary diversity of Islamic — particularly Arabic — intellectual achievement. The texts originate from every part of the Islamic world, including Moorish Al Andalus in the West and Malaysia in the East. All the great writers and philosophers of Islam are represented, including Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Al-Razi and Al-Ghazali. 24 The manuscripts are copied in a great range of scripts and styles, and date from between the eighth and nineteenth centuries.

The United States and Canada

Among the most outstanding Arabic manuscripts in the collection are two high-quality fourteenth-century copies of Al-Ghazali’s great work Al-Ihya, considered to be his magnum opus. Religious texts are among the most numerous manuscripts in the collection, and these are followed by literary and belles-lettres manuscripts. In medicine, there is a twelfth-century translation of Galen’s works on anatomy and medicine, and a complete copy (dated 1190) of Al-Majusi’s medical encyclopedia (the only Muslim scientific text which the Crusaders translated into Latin). The Garrett copy is thought to be the only complete edition in the world. There is also a medical treatise by the Syrian Ibn al-Nafis, who wrote about the circulation of the blood a full three centuries before the Spanish Protestant Michael Servetus, the man normally credited with the discovery. In the sciences, there is a richly illustrated fifteenth-century botany based on Dioscorides’ manuscript, a copy of a rare zoological manuscript by Ibn-Bakhtishu and a copy of an astronomy manuscript written by Islam’s most famous astronomer, Al-Farghani. There is an early-fifteenth-century copy of Al-Tusi’s mathematics text on geometry. Al-Tusi was Vizier to the Mongol ruler Hulagu, who sacked Baghdad in 1258. In 1259 Hulagu established an astronomical observatory at Maragheh and appointed Al-Tusi as its first Director. Among the philosophical manuscripts acquired by Garrett is a sixteenth-century copy of Ibn Sina’s Kitab al-Shifa, and a thirteenth-century copy (possibly unique) of Al-Amili’s work on logic, physics and metaphysics. 25

There are a large number of valuable history and biography manuscripts including a copy of the tenth-century Al-Ikhlas by Al-Hamdani, about the ancient history and archaeology of south Arabia. This has been translated into English under the title The Antiquities of South Arabia (Princeton, 1938).

It is apparent that several of the manuscripts in the Garrett Collection were originally held in the great royal libraries of Salah al-Din, and those of the Mameluks and Ottoman sultans, principally Sultan Bayazid II (1481–1512).

The Arabic manuscripts reveal a variety of calligraphic styles, including the four main scripts — Kufic, Nashti, Maghribi and Farisi — and their derivatives. Illustrations in the text are not common, however, except in copies of the Qur’an. One of them — dating from the eleventh century — is written in gold on vellum.

Among the Turkish and Persian manuscripts is a 1463 copy of Omar Khayyam’s Rubaiyat, one of the oldest extant copies in the world (the earliest known copy dates back to 1423). It contains some quatrains which are not found anywhere else. 26 There are three copies of Nizami’s Khamsah, one of which is famous for its fifteenth-century Persian miniatures of the Timurid school. There are also four richly illustrated copies of Firdausi’s Shah-nama, dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Persian manuscripts in Princeton’s collections are among the finest held anywhere in North America.

There are two principal catalogues of Garrett’s original collection. The first is the Descriptive Catalog of the Garrett Collection of Arabic Manuscripts in
The Princeton University Library, which was compiled by Professor Philip K. Hitti and published in 1938. In the following year two graduate students in Princeton’s Department of Oriental Languages and Literature produced the Descriptive Catalog of the Garrett Collection of Persian, Turkish and Indian Manuscripts, Including Some Miniatures, in the Princeton University Library.

Garrett’s second sequence of Islamic manuscripts was bequeathed to Princeton in 1942. These manuscripts originally belonged to Abraham Shalom Yahuda, and were bought by Robert Garrett and his brother, John W. Garrett, a graduate of Princeton and Ambassador to Italy. Yahuda was a famous oriental scholar and his collection numbered 4,800 Arabic, 216 Persian, 301 Turkish and four Urdu manuscripts. Yahuda did not sell his entire collection to the Garrett brothers — the medical manuscripts were acquired by the US Armed Forces Medical Library (now the National Library of Medicine), and another 1,500 were bequeathed to the National and University Library of Jerusalem.

Yahuda’s collection — before it was dispersed — was considered the largest and most valuable collection of Islamic manuscripts in private possession. Yahuda spent forty years travelling around the Middle East, North Africa and eastern Europe, looking for rare and valuable manuscripts. He was an Arabist, and most of his manuscripts reflect his interest in this area of Islamic studies. Like the earlier Garrett collection, the Yahuda manuscripts cover a wide range of subjects and originate from a large number of countries. The majority of the manuscripts are between 300 and 600 years old. Over eighty of the manuscripts were written by the original authors of the texts themselves. Many of the manuscripts were once owned by great names in the Arabic world, such as the master calligrapher Yaqut al-Maliki (d. 1221), the Damascus historian Ibn-abi-Shamah and the great mystic philosopher of Moorish Spain, Ibn-Arabi. There is an important legal manuscript commissioned by the Mughal Emperor, Alamgir, son of the builder of the Taj Mahal, while there are Qur’anic commentaries from the library of the Ottoman Sultan, Selim II (1566–74).

A catalogue of the manuscripts in the Yahuda Collection was completed by Rudolph Mach and issued by Princeton University in 1977. This is entitled Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda Section) in the Garrett Collection Princeton University Library. The publication of the catalogue was aided by a grant from the Pahlavi Foundation of Iran to the Princeton University Programme in Near Eastern Studies. Mach was Curator of the Near Eastern collections at Princeton University between 1955 and 1977, and Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton until his death in 1981. Apart from manuscripts, in which he displayed a keen and dedicated interest, Mach also did much to develop Princeton’s collections of Arabic, Persian and Turkish printed books into probably the finest such collection in the United States.

The third major sequence of Islamic manuscripts held by Princeton is a collection of 1,626 Arabic works obtained during the period 1955–82. These holdings are collectively referred to as the New Series, in order to distinguish them from the older Garrett collections.

As a result of the New Series manuscripts, Princeton has the finest collection of Shia texts in North America, if not the West. There are manuscripts on law and the Hadith, as well as on subjects such as grammar, philosophy and logic. The whole field of Shia religious beliefs is well covered, and there is also a substantial collection of manuscripts relating to the Shaykh school of jurisprudence, one of the leading schools of law within Twelver Shiism. Shaykhism was founded by Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Zaynud Din al-Alsai (AD 1753–1821/AH 1166–1241). The Princeton collection is the finest outside Iran, and has turned Princeton into one of the foremost centres of Shi‘a studies in the West.

Apart from the Shia collection, there is also a valuable group of manuscripts produced in Morocco, including a copy of the rare Mi‘yar of al-Wan-smashir. There are also some important medical manuscripts, including an early copy of Ibn Jumay’s Al-Tasrīh and a rare work by Ibn al-Nafis entitled Sharh tashrīh al-Qātan. The New Series collection is also rich in philosophical texts, including works by many classical authors such as Ibn Sinā, as well as those by lesser-known figures such as Al-Dawwānī and Ibn Kamāl Pasha. A bandlist for the New Series was begun by Rudolph Mach and left uncompleted on his death in 1981. However, the work was taken up by Eric Ormsby, and in 1987 there appeared the Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts (New Series) in the Princeton University Library.

The acquisition of Islamic manuscripts by Princeton mirrored the United States’ own growing perception of its role in relations with the Muslim world. Increasingly, as the twentieth century unfolded, bringing with it the demise of the former great European colonial powers, the United States saw itself being drawn out of global isolation into a direct political relationship with Islam. In 1942, Professor Hitti, the compiler of the original catalogue of Garrett manuscripts, wrote:

The importance of the acquisition and study of such collections of Arabic and Islamica transcends narrow academic considerations as we live in an interdependent world and the role played by the Arabic speaking and Islam professing peoples is becoming increasingly large. If in time of war the defense of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Egypt looms in significance as an essential factor in the defense of America, surely a study of the languages, literatures, religions, philosophy, art and history of such lands can no more be considered a luxury in time of peace.

Two years earlier, an article had appeared in the Princeton University Library Chronicle for April 1940 which expressed this new relationship, and the link that Islamic manuscripts provided, in even more eloquent terms. The article, by Nabih Amin Faris, declared:
East and West are meeting in many spheres and numerous places, on sand dunes surrounding oil wells, in the cities of the Arabian Nights and in temples of learning where Western scholarship and oriental wisdom blend. The tone which will pervade the activities of the two peoples and control all their relationships depends on the success of that blending which is the result of mutual understanding. Yet no such understanding can be reached while barriers of misunderstanding remain. Here this Collection will make its contribution. It will help to lift the veil of ignorance which has hitherto hid the face of the East. Likewise, it will aid in removing the smoke of materialism which has disfigured the likeness of the West. Then East and West shall see each other face to face, and seeing each other, recognize that they are brothers.31

Yale, etc.

Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, is one of North America's most famous universities. It was originally founded in 1701 and first called the Collegiate School of Connecticut, and then in 1718 renamed Yale College after the Governor of Connecticut, Elihu Yale. The libraries at Yale date back to the early eighteenth century and now include the Sterling Memorial Library, the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library, the Medical and Law Libraries and some forty other departmental and college libraries. The Islamic manuscripts and printed books are mainly held in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, which was opened in October 1963, and is the gift of the Beinecke family to Yale University.

There are currently 1,793 Arabic, 303 Persian and 415 Turkish manuscripts held by Yale University. The origins of this collection date back to the early years of the nineteenth century, when Yale was a pioneer centre for Arabic studies in North America, and Edward Elbridge Salisbury (1814–1901) was Professor of Arabic at Yale (1841–56).

The Islamic manuscripts at Yale originate from four principal sources. These are the collection originally acquired by Salisbury, and those of Count Carlo Landberg, the American Oriental Society (including those of William Brown Hodgson) and Oscar Rescher. Salisbury's manuscripts were presented to Yale in 1870 and number 97 Arabic texts. A number of them were purchased by Salisbury from the personal library of the French Arabist Antoine Isaac Baron Silvestre de Sacy (1757–1838). The sale of Sacy's manuscripts took place in Paris in 1842. De Sacy dominated nineteenth-century French orientalist studies. He was the first President of the Société Asiatique (founded in 1822) and Director of the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes, and was closely associated with French imperial expansion in Egypt and Morocco. He has been described as one of the founding fathers of modern oriental studies, a movement which sought to analyse, and clarify for Western audiences, the mysteries of Islam and the East (as they were perceived by contemporaries). Sacy set the tone for entire generations of Arabists in Europe. Salisbury's acquisition of Sacy's manuscripts reflects the close relationship between oriental studies in America and those in Europe in the nineteenth century. To Salisbury and his contemporaries at Yale, Sacy was the same revered authority as he was to European scholars in Germany, France and Spain.

The second major component of Yale's collections are the manuscripts acquired from Carlo, Count Landberg (1848–1924). Count Landberg was one of Sweden's most prominent Arabic scholars. Of his Arabic manuscripts, 835 were bought for Yale by Morris Ketchum Jesup, and presented to the University in 1900. Landberg had played a key part in the purchase of the famous Al-Madani manuscripts, many of which later found their way to Princeton.

The manuscripts belonging to the American Oriental Society are also housed at Yale, in the Beinecke Library. Altogether the AOS Islamic manuscripts number 85, of which 25 belong to what is known as the AOS Hodgson Collection. Half the AOS manuscripts are in Arabic (45 texts), 19 in Persian, and 21 in Turkish.

The American Oriental Society was founded in 1842, and for nearly a century dominated oriental scholarship in North America. We have already commented on the fact that it was established and developed very much in the tradition of learned societies in Europe, and its researches very much reflected interest in classical oriental studies, concentrating on archaeology, history, grammar and literature. It is appropriate that its manuscript collections should now be housed in Yale, the university which itself pioneered the early development of Islamic studies in North America, and which also reflects the close link between European and American orientalism, as it emerged in the nineteenth century.

Among the manuscripts held in the American Oriental Society's collection are fifteen manuscripts acquired early in its history. In 1849, R. P. Walters, from Salem, Massachusetts, donated the Arabic manuscripts which he had bought while he was US Consul in Zanzibar. Walter's texts date mainly from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and are mainly copies of famous classical works on subjects such as grammar, poetry, Hadith and medical science.32

The AOS Hodgson Collection is made up of manuscripts donated to the Society in 1965 by the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences in Savannah, Georgia. William Brown Hodgson was an early-nineteenth-century resident of Savannah. He was a scholar, who built up an impressive library covering a wide range of subjects. Most of the library passed to the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, which in turn donated the Arabic manuscripts to the AOS. The 538 manuscripts from the Oskar Rescher Collection constitute the most recent acquisition made by Yale University, and one of the most important collections to have reached North America in the post-war years. They were acquired in 1972. The majority (382) of Rescher's manuscripts are in Arabic,
but there are also 206 Turkish and 80 Persian texts. Oskar Rescher (1883-1972), who began life as a German and ended it as a Turk, came from a prosperous Stuttgart family. In Berlin, he enrolled at the School of Oriental Languages, where he began his study of Arabic, a subject he continued to pursue under Professor Fischer at Leipzig University. It was during this period of his career — in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of World War I — that Rescher began to develop his interest in Islamic manuscripts. Like other German scholars of his generation he travelled to Turkey, a country with which imperial Germany had increasingly close political and commercial relations. There he spent time researching among the manuscript collections in Istanbul’s many royal and private libraries. The outbreak of the war saw Rescher involved in active service on the Western Front, and after his capture by French troops he was interned in a prisoner-of-war camp at Wiensdorf. This could have put an end to his interest in Arabic and Turkish studies, at least temporarily, but fortunately Rescher’s talents were quickly spotted, and he was put in charge of censoring incoming and outgoing letters written in Arabic by and to French North African troops. He was later to publish several works on North African Arabic dialects. After the war, Rescher became Lecturer in Arabic at the University of Breslau in eastern Germany (now Wroclaw in Poland), was soon appointed to the position of Assistant Professor, and continued to make frequent trips to Turkey.

In 1935, with the Weimar Republic still struggling to establish itself, and political and economic stability eluding Germany (particularly in depressed eastern provinces such as Silesia), Rescher decided to settle permanently in Turkey. He became Professor of German at the Turkish Military Academy in Istanbul. For him this was the logical culmination of his work and interests. By 1937, the Nazi Party was firmly established in power in Germany, and was increasingly harassing Jews. Rescher, a German of Jewish origin, was stripped of his citizenship. The Turks were only too willing to adopt him. He became a Turkish subject, and changed his name to Osman Reser. He was to spend the remainder of his life until his death in 1972 in Turkey. For the last sixteen years of his life he was on the staff of the Islamic Institute of the University of Istanbul.

The collection which Rescher built up in the course of nearly 50 years’ residence in Turkey reflects his keen scholarly appreciation of manuscripts. The texts are carefully selected. Many of them are rarely found in the West, and originate from the collections of important Islamic scholars. Rescher became a great friend of many of the more eminent Turkish Muslim scholars, such as Hoca Ismail Saip.

The Islamic manuscripts collections at Yale include a number of interesting items, which are worth looking at in some detail. One of the oldest manuscripts in the collection is a late-eleventh-century Arabic dictionary, compiled by Al-Gharib al-Miṣannaff. There is a rare copy of the Qur’an in microscopic writing, dated AD 1261/2 and copied by Yâkût al-Mutasîmî, calligrapher to the last Abbasid caliph, Al-Mustaṣsim. Al-Mustaṣsim was murdered with his family during the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258; they were apparently trampled to death beneath carpets in their palace. There is a twelfth-century history of the Arab conquests by Al-Baldâdhuri entitled Futûth al-balîdân. Several of the manuscripts in the collection carry famous autographs, including that of Ibn al-Ârî, the Sufi mystic, and Ibn Hajar (1572-1449), the interpreter of Islamic traditions.

Among the manuscripts which originate from the Landberg collections is a unique eighteenth-century copy of a sixteenth-century treatise on coffee. The treatise reflects the longstanding — and at times bitter — controversy that raged over coffee in the Muslim world. Should coffee be considered an intoxicant like alcohol, and forbidden, or was it to be permitted? At the end of the tenth century, a violent controversy broke out in Damascus over coffee, which ended in the famous bean being banned for a short period. Poems, speeches and treatises were written for and against it by lawyers, philosophers and theologians. Eventually the ban was lifted, and the drinking of coffee officially resumed. The manuscript in the Yale collections brings together the various writings by the pro- and anti-coffee lobbies. It is a fascinating insight into a controversy, now forgotten, which in its time tore the Muslim world apart.

Another of the Landberg manuscripts is a late-sixteenth-century copy of the Kitâb Laqî al-ma’rûf fî ‘âhâm al-jâmm by Jalâl al-Dîn al-Suyûtî. This is a book about spirits, or genii (jinn), and is a complete study of genii and their behaviour. Again, the manuscript affords a unique insight into popular Muslim beliefs, often at variance with the stricter, orthodox teachings. There is also a manuscript on tea and tea drinking, a treatise against Christianity written in 1420 by a Christian renegade from the Spanish island of Majorca, and a splendid text in fine calligraphic Naskhi script dating from the fourteenth century by Abû al-Faraj, on the virtues of Europeans and black Africans. The author, in his preface, explains that he was moved to write the treatise ‘because I saw many fine Ethiopians whose hearts were broken on account of their colour. I told them, therefore, that merit is earned by good achievements (îh{sâ’n}, not by good looks (al-suwar al-hisâb), and composed this book for them.’ The writer seems to be an early example of someone who was genuinely concerned to improve race relations. Finally, several of the Landberg manuscripts deal with the subject of tobacco, another substance which like coffee provoked a great deal of debate in the Muslim world, with many people wanting to see it banned on the grounds that it is an intoxicant.

Among the interesting manuscripts originating from the Rescher collection are works by Ibn al-Jawzî and Ibn Sînâ, and some valuable texts on medicine, history (including a copy of Al-Nahwî’s manuscript Al-Burg al-Yamâni fi al-fath al-Uthmâni, dealing with the Turkish conquest of Yemen), mathematics and astronomy. There is a copy of a previously unknown tract on prosody by Al-Gulistani and an excellent early copy of Al-Harîrî’s Ma’qûnî. Among the Turkish manuscripts are finely illustrated medical texts, and diwans by various poets, including some women poets. The Persian manuscripts include an
old copy of a biography by Allami of the Indian Mughal Emperor, Akbar (1556–1605).

The main catalogue to Yale’s collections is Leon Nemoy’s Arabic Manuscripts in the Yale University Library. This was first published in 1956, and lists 1,682 titles from the Salisbury, Landberg and open collections (miscellaneous acquisitions). There is, as yet, no catalogue which covers the Persian and Turkish collections, although there are plans to issue a supplement to the 1956 catalogue which will include the Rescher manuscripts. The American Oriental Society collections are listed in Elizabeth Strout’s Catalogue of the Library of the American Oriental Society, published by Yale University Press in 1930.

Also in Connecticut is to be found the collection of Hartford College. Hartford is a religious college, founded over 150 years ago in 1836. It has a collection of about 1,400 Arabic manuscripts, over 1,200 of which are complete. There are also 200 Persian and Turkish manuscripts. The majority of the manuscripts cover Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy, Islamic theology, Sufi thought, Qur’anic texts and commentaries, Hadith and biographies, including studies on the life of the Prophet. There is also a collection of 20,000 printed books in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, covering mainly Qur’anic studies, Muslim theology and Islamic law. The manuscripts and books are at present housed in the Case Memorial Library at Hartford College. The main collectors of the Hartford manuscripts were Duncan Black MacDonald, who travelled to Cairo in 1907–8 in order to acquire manuscripts for the college, and Madrıs Harootjun Ananian, whose collection of Arabic and Persian manuscripts was bought for Hartford by Robert Garrett, one of the patrons of Princeton University.

The catalogues of the Hartford collection include William Madison Randall’s Detailed Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Ananian Collection of the Hartford Seminary Foundation. This lists 127 of the manuscripts. In 1954/55 Dr Rudolph Mach produced a typed sheet catalogue covering most of the Arabic manuscripts in the collection. A grant application is pending for a full catalogue to be produced.

Harvard

Yale’s sister university, Harvard, at Cambridge in Massachusetts, was founded on 28 October 1636 and named after John Harvard, who in his will left half of his estate and his 400-volume library to the new college. The library which he helped establish is the oldest in the United States and today is the largest university library in the world, with a collection of nearly 10,000,000 volumes.

The University’s collections of Islamic manuscripts are housed in two locations: the Houghton Library and the Widener Memorial Library. The Houghton Library has a collection of 800 Arabic, 65 Persian and 37 Turkish manuscripts, the majority of them on loan from the Semitic Museum. The manuscripts appear to date mainly from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The Widener Memorial Library — which was opened in 1915 in memory of Harry Elkins Widener, a young Harvard graduate who died in the Titanic disaster at the age of 27 — has a collection of 306 Arabic manuscript volumes, with approximately 500 titles. The manuscripts were purchased between 1970 and 1977, mainly from Fr Abu Sab of Beirut and E. R. Sasson of Netanya. Among the catalogues prepared for the collection is John Orne’s Descriptive handlist of the Arabic manuscripts in the Semitic Museum, published in 1902. There are typescipt lists of the Persian and Turkish collections.

New York State

New York’s Islamic manuscript collections are to be found in two main centres — New York Public Library and Columbia University Library, with a number of smaller collections at such places as the Pierpont Morgan Library.

New York Public Library

The Islamic manuscripts in the New York Public Library are housed in the Oriental division, which was created in 1897. Currently, they number around 400, and this breaks down into about 250 Arabic manuscripts, 100 Persian and 35 Turkish. The New York Public Library has a long and distinguished tradition in oriental and Islamic studies and is the inheritor of the original collections built up by the Astor Library.

By the late 1840s the Astor Library in New York was beginning to develop into one of North America’s most important oriental collections. In 1854 Joseph Cogswell produced, on behalf of the Library, a catalogue relating to the languages and literatures of Asia, Africa and the Oceanic Islands. Ten years later, the Library collections covered thirty oriental languages and eleven different scripts, and numbered about 2,000 printed books. Islamic manuscripts were also acquired by the Astor Library, though not in as large numbers as books and printed materials. The growth in this area would come later.

In 1895, when the Astor oriental collection passed to the Public Library, it was soon realized that it constituted an important collection in its own right, and two years later it was decided to create the Oriental Division. Using funds bequeathed by Jacob Schiff — a wealthy New York businessman — a special programme was established to acquire Semitic-language literature (this covered Arabic and Hebrew materials). Richard Gottheil, then Professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University, was placed in charge of the newly created Department of Semitics and Orientalia, with Abraham Friedus as his Chief Cataloguer. Their relationship was from the start uneasy, and in 1901 it was decided to split the Department into two divisions, a Hebrew and an Oriental division. Gottheil remained in charge of the Oriental division, while Friedus took control of the Hebrew collections.
Schiff money supported Gottheil for the next fourteen years, and helped him create an important collection of Islamic manuscripts at the New York Public Library. He went on regular trips to the Middle East between 1897 and 1915 in search of Arabic, Persian and Turkish materials, and it was as a result of this that he was able to place the New York Public Library in the first rank of US Islamic manuscript collections. In 1915, however, Gottheil and Schiff had serious personal disagreements, mainly in regard to the politics of the First World War, and Schieff withdrew his support for the funding of Gottheil’s Oriental division. Although this was a severe blow for Gottheil, it did not hamper the work of the Division, as funds were now forthcoming from the central budget of the New York Public Library. By the time Gottheil retired in 1934 he had ensured that the New York Islamic collections would remain of prime national importance. Gottheil and his assistant, Ida Pratt, were succeeded by John Mish and Frances Paar, who continued the scholarly work for which Gottheil and Pratt were famous. By the middle years of the twentieth century the Oriental division of New York Public Library was considered to be an important scholarly centre for oriental studies. Among the most valuable of the manuscripts held by the New York Public Library is a copy of the Persian classic Shi‘h-nama, illustrated in 1614 for Shah Abbas. It has 44 miniatures which are based on the early Timurid style of court painting.

The Islamic manuscript collections at the New York Public Library were originally catalogued in card format, but are now available in MARC database format. There is no separate printed catalogue for the Islamic collections, and information about manuscript items must be obtained directly from the Oriental division.

Columbia University Library

Also located in New York State is Columbia University. The University traces its origins back to the eighteenth century, when it was known as King’s College. After the War of Independence, King’s College metamorphosed into Columbia College. The library grew from 200 books in 1784, to over 8 million books and periodicals by 1928 and 4½ million books and 4 million letters and manuscripts by 1980. It is now one of the largest university library collections in the United States.

The Islamic manuscripts held by the University are now housed in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. There are 388 Arabic, 104 Persian and 32 Turkish manuscripts. The collection was established in the twentieth century, mainly as a result of bequests by David Eugene Smith (1860–1944) and George Arthur Plimpton (1885–1930). Almost 450 of the manuscripts originate from the Smith–Plimpton Collection. Smith was Professor of Mathematics at Columbia University’s Teachers College, and Plimpton assisted him in obtaining manuscripts. The texts bequeathed by Smith and Plimpton cover mathematics, astronomy, religion and philosophy, and also include 138 copies of the Qur’an, which according to J. D. Pearson are somewhat uninteresting.\(^\text{40}\) Smith and Plimpton did not concentrate exclusively on Islamic manuscripts. They are more famous for their collection of school textbooks and medieval Western manuscripts. However, there are items in the Islamic collections which are worth noting, including a late-fourteenth-century copy from Makkah of a treatise on Sufism by Muhammad al-Shadhili entitled Nuḥzat al-Tashkiraḥ wa Nuḥzat al-Tubṣurah, a seventeenth-century copy of the Persian treatise on ethics by the famous astronomer Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, bound in green leather and embossed in gold, and a sixteenth-century Turkish translation of the famous Kālilah wa-Dīnimah by Ali Chalabi Wāṣf.\(^\text{41}\)

Other Islamic manuscripts which entered Columbia University include those purchased in 1959 from the estate of Arthur Jeffery (1893–1959). Jeffery was Professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University. The majority of the manuscripts bequeathed by Jeffery were in Arabic, and mainly covered Qur’anic exegesis and interpretation.

There is no printed catalogue of the Columbia Islamic manuscript collections. A partial catalogue was compiled by Nicholas Martinovich in the late 1920s and was published in the Journal of the American Oriental Society for 1929.

Other New York Collections

The Pierpont Morgan Library in New York was founded by John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) and developed by his son John Pierpont Morgan Jr (1867–1943). It became a public library in 1924. It is famous for its collection of European medieval manuscripts, but also includes some outstanding Islamic manuscript items. Among these is the magnificent Manafi‘ al-Hujjat copied at Maragha in either 1297 or 1299. Its 96 exquisite paintings of animals are considered to be the first examples of Mongol Islamic art to have been produced following the ruthless destruction of the great centres of Islamic culture in central Asia and Iraq in the mid-thirteenth century. The Pierpont Morgan Library also possesses an album which once belonged to the Emir of Bukhara and contains some outstanding examples of Persian miniature art.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York also has a small, but valuable, collection of Islamic manuscripts, including eleven Qur’ans and over 320 Persian manuscript leaves, with some extremely beautiful Persian miniatures. The collection was begun in 1911 with a copy of the Bustan by Sa‘di. In 1913, Alexander Smith Cochran presented the Museum with 24 manuscripts. These became its core collection. Among the texts is a copy of Nizami’s Persian classic Haft Parvar, part of a quartet commissioned by Prince Baysonghr in the 1420s. Baysonghr was famous for his patronage of books, art and libraries, and his artists created the famous Herat school of painting which flowered in the fifteenth century.\(^\text{42}\) The Museum also has a 1483 copy of the Mantiq al-tayr (Language of the Birds), produced in Herat on
the orders of Sultan Ali of Meshed and completed in Isfahan. The richly illuminated manuscript is a perfect synthesis of the Herat and Isfahan styles of Persian court painting. In 1914 A.V. Williams Jackson and Abraham Yohanan published A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts, Including Also Some Turkish and Arabic, Presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York by Alexander Smith Cochran. The Museum is today one of the leading centres in the United States for study and research into Persian miniature painting.

Pennsylvania

The State of Pennsylvania has several centres with Islamic manuscripts. Among the most important are the Free Library of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania.

Free Library of Philadelphia

The collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia is due almost entirely to one man, John Frederick Lewis (1860–1932). On his death, his widow bequeathed to the Free Library the collection of Islamic manuscripts built up by Lewis. These included 35 Arabic, 52 Persian and ten Turkish manuscripts, as well as 270 Persian manuscript leaves, 500 Mughal and 435 Rajput manuscript leaves.

Lewis trained as a lawyer, and, coming from a family which had long been associated with the clipper sailing ships of the American East Coast, he became a specialist in maritime law, and eventually Chief of the United States Shipping Board and Director of the Navigation and Marine Engineering Schools. This seems an extraordinary background from which a collector of Islamic manuscripts would emerge, but Lewis was an extraordinary man. He had far-ranging interests, which transcended the confines of his official work. He was President of the Philadelphia Academy of Music, President of the Academy of Arts, President of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society and a trustee of the Free Library of Philadelphia. From an early age he was a collector of books. His interests in this field took him back to the origins of the written word, and he became an avid collector of the cuneiform tablets of the Sumerians and the Babylonians. Eventually he acquired nearly 3,000 of them. From here he progressed to collecting medieval European manuscripts, the first of which he obtained in 1907. But his last and perhaps greatest love was to be Islamic manuscripts, particularly the richly illuminated manuscripts of Persia and Mughal India. In 1926, the Iranian government mounted a major exhibition in Philadelphia. It was at this exhibition that Lewis first became aware of the tremendous diversity and sophistication of Islamic art. He became an immediate convert, and set about collecting both complete manuscripts and individual illustrated leaves. He became fascinated by the art of the Persian garden, as seen through the eyes of Persian and Mughal artists and poets. Many of the manuscripts he collected reflect this interest. He also became an avid collector of manuscripts which had outstanding examples of Islamic calligraphy. Many of the texts he acquired dated from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, and his collection of Mughal and Rajput miniatures is one of the important collections of Indo-Persian art to be found in the United States today.

In 1937, five years after Lewis’s death, the Free Library published a catalogue of the Islamic manuscript collection. This was entitled Oriental Manuscripts of the John Frederick Lewis Collection in the Free Library of Philadelphia, and was compiled by Muhammad Ahmed Semsar.

University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania has a small collection of 44 Islamic manuscripts. These are presently located in the Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library (Special Collections Department) of the university. The Islamic collection is the result of two bequests, the first in 1902 by Dr William Camac and the second in 1957 by Gordon A. Block Jr.

Camac collected 35 Arabic and one Persian manuscript, all of which passed to the university library. He was an extravagant, self-indulgent man, with a flair and style for living which irritated many of his more industrious contemporaries and eventually led to his ruin. He qualified as a doctor at the Jefferson Medical College only so that he could marry the daughter of a rich and well-established Quaker family. They had been horrified to find out that he had no respectable professional employment. Once he had qualified and married, he never practised as a doctor again. Instead, with substantial family money behind him, he devoted himself to his two great loves: botany and natural history. He built an amazing conservatory, which became famous for its palms and exotic plants, and he assumed the position of President of the newly established Philadelphia Zoological Society. Then, in a sudden fling of extravagant imagination — conceiving of himself as perhaps a great explorer or discoverer of the hidden lands of the ancients — Camac decided to set out on a trip down the Nile. He planned the voyage in great style, taking his entire family and household with him. A houseboat was hired, with a retinue of servants. Camac’s affairs were left in the hands of a personal friend. When he returned from Egypt, he was ruined. His fortune had been wasted; his friend had vanished. His house and personal possessions were auctioned to meet his debts, and the Camacs emigrated to New York. It was in this way that the University of Pennsylvania acquired the collection of Arabic manuscripts which Camac had once owned. He had bought these manuscripts while travelling in Egypt.

Although he was by no means a scholar of Arabic manuscripts, Camac did manage to acquire several valuable items. One of these is a rare and exquisite copy of Baydawi’s well-known commentary on the Qur’an, the Anwar al Tawil wa Asrār al-Ta’wil (The Lights of Revelation and the Mysteries of Interpretation). This commentary is considered to be perhaps the most
important ever written on the Qur'an, and seeks to explain each passage in the Qur'an according to 'the rules of the law and the tradition'. The manuscript dates from the seventeenth century and appears to have been copied in Persia.

A smaller collection of Arabic manuscripts (numbering ten items) was received in 1968 from Gordon A. Block, a Philadelphia lawyer. This bequest included a number of Qur'ans, most of them dating from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. There is no published catalogue of the Islamic manuscript collections held by the University of Pennsylvania.

Cleveland, Ohio

Cleveland Public Library in Ohio has a collection of interesting Islamic manuscripts dealing with the subject of chess. They form part of a bequest by John Griswold White (1845–1928), and were bequeathed to the library after the collector's death in 1928. They are now located in a special department, known as the John G. White Department. Altogether there are 54 Arabic, 74 Persian and 27 Turkish manuscripts in the collection, as well as books and documents in all the world's languages dealing with chess. This is certainly the largest chess library in the United States, and perhaps in the world.

In his obsession to find out everything there was to learn about chess, White went right back to the origins of the game. This involved him in the search for early Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts on the game, as well as in collecting ancillary texts on subjects which related to chess as it was developed by the Arabs and the Persians, such as history, philosophy, mathematics and even the occult. Among the manuscripts bequeathed after his death is a copy of the Kitāb al-shatranj by Abu al-Muzaffar ibn Sa'id and a copy of the Kitāb annāthāh al-qitāl fi lab al-shatranj by Shihāb al-Dīn Abī al-Abbas al-Tillimānī, which supplies a great deal of valuable information as to the nature of the traditional diagrams of normal positions in the openings. The Islamic manuscripts held in the Cleveland Public Library are included in the two-volume Catalog of the Chess Collection (Including Checkers) of the Cleveland Public Library: John G. White Department. This was published in Boston in 1964. There is also a typed list of the Persian and Arabic manuscripts, produced in Berlin in 1929.

The University of Michigan

The University of Michigan was founded at Detroit in 1817. In 1837 it moved to its present campus at Ann Arbor. The library opened in 1840, with a collection of around 3,000 books. By 1980 it had a collection of over five million volumes. Its collection of Islamic manuscripts is one of the larger US collections, with 1,120 manuscripts in Islamic languages. A great many of these are Arabic manuscripts, but there are also around 200 Persian and 100 Turkish texts. To date, 851 of the Islamic manuscripts have been formally accessioned and catalogued. These all derive from four main sources: the Abdul Hamid, Tiflis, Yahuda and MacGregor collections.

The Abdul Hamid manuscripts were obtained from the personal manuscript library of the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid (1876–1906). After his death in exile his library was sold and ended up in the hands of a Cairo dealer, who had had previous dealings with the University of Michigan. In 1924, the university acquired two-thirds of Abdul Hamid's manuscripts with funds supplied by an anonymous Detroit donor. The rest went to the British Museum. Altogether, 288 of the Sultan's manuscripts reached the university, and these included 98 Arabic, 107 Persian, 62 Turkish and 22 mixed-language texts. Sultan Abdul Hamid II was the last Ottoman ruler to try to create a specifically pan-Islamic role for the crumbling Turkish Empire. He was a keen Muslim scholar, and read widely on all aspects of Islamic law and theology. He saw in Islam a spiritual, as well as a political, force. It was during his reign that the famous Hejaz Railway was built (1900–8) in order to transport Haj pilgrims to Mecca and Madinah, but it was also an attempt to facilitate military and political control of the Arabian hinterland. He championed the role of the Sultan as Caliph of the Muslim world. In 1908 the Young Turks moved against the Sultan. His political power base was destroyed, and in 1909 he was sent into exile. The Sultan's attempt to use Islam in support of political objectives was discredited, and was not a policy espoused by Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish reformer.

The manuscripts collected by Sultan Abdul Hamid reflect his strong interest in Islam. There are many copies of the Qur'an, as well as commentaries on the Hadith and the traditions. Manuscripts covering history, philology, poetry, biography and law are also well represented.

In 1924 — the same year as the Abdul Hamid manuscripts were bought for the library — the anonymous Detroit benefactor also acquired another collection of Islamic manuscripts for the University. This is known as the Tiflis Collection, although the reasons for this are somewhat unclear. There is a suggestion that the manuscripts may have been acquired from Tiflis in south Georgia, but there is nothing to substantiate this theory. Altogether, 161 manuscripts were added to the library under this bequest. These are almost all Arabic texts and mainly cover Muslim law.

Two further collections also entered the library in the 1924–46 period. Two hundred and thirty manuscripts were bought from A.S. Yahuda the oriental scholar. Many of his other manuscripts went to Princeton and the National Library of Medicine. The texts obtained by Michigan include 214 Arabic manuscripts, mainly covering the Qur'an, Hadith, the religious traditions, history, law, poetry and biography. There are four Persian manuscripts concerning history and biography, and nine Turkish manuscripts concerning theology, law, philology and poetry. One interesting text is a polymath Turkish–Persian–Arabic manuscript. The other major collection was obtained with funds from Tracy McGregor, the Detroit philanthropist and book collector, by Professor Karpinski of Michigan in 1933/4 as part of a purchase of Arabic and Turkish
books, manuscripts, and Globes and Instruments'. This collection of 150 Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts covers mainly mathematics and astronomy, and forms a valuable source for anyone interested in the Islamic sciences. Louis Charles Karpinski, who made the purchase, was Professor of Mathematics at Michigan between 1919 and 1948. He is generally accredited with having given Michigan one of the finest history of science collections anywhere in North America, and donated to the University valuable books on mathematics and cartography from his own collection.

The major catalogue of the University of Michigan's Islamic manuscript collections was compiled by William Hoyt Worrell (1879–1952), Professor of Semitics at the University of Michigan between 1925–1949. Manuscripts are listed in inventory number order and are also arranged in rough groupings by subject and language. There are no author or title indexes, except for an incomplete author index to the McGregor collection.

Today, the University has important links with the Muslim world. There is a Center for Near Eastern and African Studies, with courses and research programmes covering the history, art, politics, languages and literatures of Islamic peoples from Morocco in the West to Afghanistan in the East. There are also formal inter-university links with Assiut University in Egypt and Kuwait University, and the University co-sponsors a number of American academic research organizations, such as the American Institute of Yemen Studies and the American Research Center in Turkey.

**Chicago**

The Newberry Library in Chicago has a collection of 53 Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts. The Library was founded in 1887, through the bequest of Walter Newberry (1804–68), a prominent Chicago businessman. Since it was established, it has tended to concentrate on subjects in the humanities, and is now one of Chicago's leading libraries for books in these subject areas. The Islamic manuscripts in the Newberry Library do not result from a specific decision by the Library to acquire oriental materials. Rather, they were acquired by it as part of larger bequests, which covered subjects in many other fields. In this way, the Islamic manuscripts collected by Henry Probasco and Everett E. Ayer entered the Library.

Henry Probasco (1822–1902) was a wealthy Cincinnati businessman, famous for his monumental tastes. He designed and built one of the grandest mansions ever to grace Cincinnati, and he was an avid collector of rare books and manuscripts. His collection included twelfth-century illuminated manuscripts from Western Europe, a first folio of Shakespeare and an elephant folio of Audubon's *Birds of America*. After an extraordinary period of wrangling, the entire collection was purchased in 1890 by the Newberry Library for $52,924, which was only two-thirds of what its actual value was estimated to be. Among the items included in this purchase were Arabic and Persian manuscripts which Probasco had acquired. In 1911, Everett E. Ayer, a Chicago business

*The United States and Canada*

The largest collection of Islamic manuscripts on the West Coast of the United States is to be found at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). It is also the second largest collection in the United States, with over 5,000 Islamic manuscripts. This figure breaks down into 2,878 Arabic, 1,197 Persian and 902 Turkish manuscripts. There are also estimated to be another 2,400 uncatalogued Turkish manuscripts. The manuscripts are located in the Near East collection in the University's Research Library. This collection has an impressive range of materials on the peoples, cultures and countries of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, and supports the University's active Near East Studies programme. The rise of UCLA to become one of the foremost Islamic studies centres in the United States is little short of phenomenal, and is a perfect microcosm of the very rapid development of interest in the Islamic world that has characterized American affairs since 1945. Previously, oriental and Islamic studies had been very much a preserve of the East Coast, and the great centres of Islamic learning were rooted there in places like Yale and Princeton. There were instabilities with strong links to the West European orientalist tradition. Following the Second World War, and the need for the development of more American expertise on Islam, places such as UCLA began to emerge on the scene.

In 1957, Professor Gustave Von Grunebaum founded the Near East Studies Centre at UCLA. It had, at its inauguration, no books or manuscripts. By
1968 its collection of books had grown to around 25,000 volumes and its manuscripts to over 5,000. The Centre has become a particularly important focus for Turkish and Persian studies in the United States, as well as having an outstanding collection of Arabic materials, most of them acquired since 1962 through the Library of Congress acquisitions programme in Cairo.

The majority of the University’s Islamic collections were acquired in the 1960s. The collection includes groups of manuscripts from Istanbul, Aleppo, Kerman, Isfahan and London. It is undoubtedly the largest single collection of Islamic manuscripts built up in the Western world in recent years. Professor Von Grunebaum, assisted by his colleagues Andreas Tietze and Amin Banani, has succeeded in creating at UCLA one of the most valuable repositories for Islamic manuscripts anywhere in the West.

The Aleppo manuscripts were purchased through the Aintabi family, a well-known father and son bookselling company in Aleppo, who acted as agents for UCLA for many years, acquiring Arabic and Turkish manuscripts. The Kerman Collection, from Kerman in Iran, relates mainly to the Shaykhī sect in Islam, which is a precursor of sorts of the Bahā’ī movement. This collection is widely consulted by Bahā’ī scholars. It reached UCLA through the efforts of a brilliant young Swiss scholar called Rudolf Gelpke, whose wife came from Kerman. Gelpke was a visiting Professor to the Near East Studies Centre, and travelled to Iran for summer research and study visits. During one of these visits he arranged the purchase of the Kerman manuscripts. Tragically, Gelpke died soon afterwards of a brain haemorrhage. The Isfahan manuscripts were obtained from the private library of a London-educated Armenian doctor called Dr Minasian, who was settled in Isfahan and who was a great collector of Persian and Arabic manuscripts dealing with medicine and science. Specialists in the Persian studies from the Near East Studies Centre visited Dr Minasian and arranged the purchase of parts of his library. The medical and scientific manuscripts acquired from Dr Minasian have turned UCLA into a major centre for the study of Islamic medicine and science. The London manuscripts were obtained from the Wellcome Institute of Medicine and mainly consisted of non-medical items which the Institute no longer required.

The Islamic manuscripts cover a wide range of subject fields. They mainly date from between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, and encompass medical textbooks, religious tracts, histories, grammars, dictionaries, astrological guides, poetry, anthologies and encyclopedias. Among the most important texts is a rare ninth-century copy of an Arabic translation of Galen’s work on anatomy, and a 1242 copy of Ibn al-Nafis’ work on the system of blood circulation through the body. There are many copies of the Persian literary classics — the works of the poets Firdausi, Sa’di, Hafiz and Nizami are all well represented. Mysticism and astrology are two areas in which the UCLA collections excel. There are manuscripts dealing with alchemy, fortune-telling, hermetic medicine, geomancy and the interpretation of dreams. A unique text is a copy of Karim Kirmani’s work on the significance and meaning of the colour red. There are also a large number of manuscripts of folk-tales, including a late-eighteenth-century Egyptian manuscript illustrating the tale of Sinbad the Sailor.

The principal catalogues of the collections are by A. Z. Iskander, whose Descriptive List of Arabic Manuscripts on Medicine and Science at the University of California, Los Angeles was published by E. J. Brill of Leiden in 1984; and Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, whose Arabic Medical Manuscripts at the University of California, Los Angeles was published in 1983. There is also a Persian-language catalogue of Persian manuscripts entitled Naskhah-ha-yi Khattī, daffar-i 11/12, compiled by Dr Muhammad Taqi Dānish-piz̢kī, a professor from Tehran University, which was published in Tehran in 1981. An unpublished catalogue of the Persian medical manuscripts was created by Dr Lutz Richter-Bernburg of Frankfurt. This can be consulted in the Research Library’s Department of Special Collections.

Other libraries on the West Coast of the United States which have collections of Islamic manuscripts include the Lane Medical Library at Stanford University Medical Centre, Palo Alto, which has a small but interesting collection of about fifty Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu manuscripts, the majority of them on medical and related subjects. These were all acquired from Professor Seidel of Meissen in 1921. There is also the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery at San Marino, which has about twenty manuscripts, mainly copies of the Qur’an.

Canada: Montreal, Toronto

Canada’s links with the Islamic world have developed in the twentieth century. Prior to 1910, Canada had no direct political or cultural contact with any Muslim country. Consequently, Islamic studies had no established place in the country’s academic institutions. It was not until the present century, when Canada achieved a distinct international role, that a clear need was felt to create a centre for Islamic scholarship. This is the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal, and it is now one of North America’s leading centres for research on the Muslim world.

Montreal is the focal point for Canadian interest in Islam. McGill University is the city’s most important academic institution, and was originally established in 1821. Its first library was created two years later. The McGill libraries rank as among the largest academic collections in Canada. Islamic manuscripts are held by several of the University’s libraries, including the Institute of Islamic Studies, the Blacker-Wood Library of Zoology and Ornithology and the Osler Library. The Osler Library of the History of Medicine is named after its principal benefactor, Sir William Osler (1849-1919), one of Canada’s most highly regarded medical physicians. He was a graduate of McGill University, and in the course of a very distinguished career, which included the position of Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University (1905–19), he succeeded in building up a very impressive collection of books and manuscripts relating to the history of medicine. These he
and endow a library of zoology at McGill University. These two libraries were eventually to be merged as the Blacker-Wood Library of Zoology and Ornithology.

Casey Wood’s interest in Islamic manuscripts seems to have developed out of his interest in travelling in Muslim countries. He had made his first expedition to the East in 1908, when he visited Turkey and Syria. In 1924, following his retirement, he arrived in India, and was to spend nearly two years exploring the subcontinent. In 1935 he was in Cairo. He was back in Egypt in 1938 and in 1939 was in Tunisia and Libya. But it was in Calcutta in 1925 that he was to make his most extraordinary contact — with Vladimir Ivanov (1886-1970), a White Russian scholar and exile, and the man who was responsible for acquiring the Islamic manuscripts that Wood eventually bequeathed to McGill University.

Ivanov arrived in India in the early 1920s, and established himself in Calcutta. He had already studied Arabic and Persian, under the direct tuition of Baron Victor Van Rosen, one of Russia’s most eminent Arabic scholars, and had then taken up the post of Assistant Keeper of Oriental manuscripts at the Oriental Museum of the Russian Academy of Science at St Petersburg. When the Revolution broke out, Ivanov was already on the borders of Persia. He had been sent on a mission by the library to collect Islamic manuscripts in Russian central Asia. This mission he never completed. Instead, he crossed over into Persia, and took up a post with the British government. He eventually became a British citizen, never seeing Russia again.

In Calcutta, Ivanov soon established for himself a reputation as an Islamic scholar. In 1924, he became an associate member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the prestigious learned society founded in 1784 by Sir William Jones. About the same time that he arrived in Calcutta the Asiatic Society was looking for someone to catalogue its rich collection of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts, built up over 150 years. Ivanov was assigned the job and in 1924 his Concise descriptive catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal was published in five volumes. He followed it with a catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts. Ivanov’s reputation was established through this work, and also through his great interest in the Ismaili movement. He in fact became one of the world’s acknowledged scholars on Ismailism, and published a large number of books and articles on both the Western and Eastern branches of the movement. In the latter part of his career, he was financially supported by the Aga Khan, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, who encouraged his researches into the early history of Ismailism.

In 1925, Ivanov and Casey Wood met, an extraordinary encounter of two worlds, brought together through an interest in Islamic manuscripts: Casey Wood, a Canadian medical professor, fascinated by ophthalmology and ornithology, a representative of the new confident North America now emerging on the world scene, and Ivanov, a White Russian exile, a Persian scholar, a representative of a world that had ceased to exist at the time of the
Bolshevik Revolution. Casey Wood commissioned Ivanov to collect Persian and Arabic manuscripts on his behalf. Ivanov seems to have been responsible for most of the 248 Persian and 86 Arabic manuscripts bought by Casey Wood in India in 1925/6. The majority of these were presented to the Blacker–Wood Library at the Zoology and Ornithology, the others going to the Osler Library and the McLennan Library. In 1927 Vladimir Ivanov produced a handwritten catalogue of the manuscripts he had collected for Casey Wood. This was entitled Annotated catalogue of the Casey A. Wood Collection of Persian, Arabic and Hindustani Manuscripts. A copy is held by the Blacker–Wood Library, and is a guide to the items collected by Ivanov.

The Islamic Studies Library at McGill University is part of the Institute of Islamic Studies, founded in 1952 by Professor Cantrell Smith. Smith had spent many years in India researching into the role of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. His book Modern Islam in India was the result of this research. When he returned from India, Smith was fired by the idea of creating a centre in Canada which would help improve an understanding of Muslim society and culture, and persuaded McGill University to establish the Institute of Islamic Studies. In its first years it was largely dependent on funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. Today the Institute of Islamic Studies has established for McGill University a valid and enduring role in the interchange of ideas between the Western and Muslim worlds. Its library has a collection of 81,000 volumes covering all aspects of Islam as a religion and as a civilization, both historical and contemporary, with books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu. It also has 188 manuscripts, which include 31 Turkish, 33 Persian and 124 Arabic texts. The majority of the Arabic manuscripts are in theology, fiqh, tasfīr, rhetoric and grammar. The Persian manuscripts include texts on ethics, theology, tasfīr and fiqh. The majority of the Turkish manuscripts are on Sufism, fiqh and theology. All the Islamic manuscripts held by the Institute have been acquired since its establishment in 1952. As yet, no printed catalogue of the collection exists, although a card catalogue is available.

The McLennan Library was opened in 1969, and serves the research needs of the humanities and social science faculties at the University. It has a collection of 45 Arabic, 31 Persian and five Turkish manuscripts, mostly donated by Dr Casey Wood. They appear to belong to the original Ivanov collection. There is no catalogue to these manuscripts.

The only other important collection of Islamic manuscripts in Canada is that held by the University of Toronto. The University was founded in 1827 as King’s College and became the University of Toronto in 1849. The Islamic manuscripts are held in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, and include Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts. There is some doubt as to the exact numbers of Islamic manuscripts held by the University, as few of them have ever been catalogued. According to Thomas Martin, there are over 1,000 manuscripts, but Pearson estimates the figures to be much less. One of the more important Persian manuscripts held by the University is a rare sixteenth century copy of the Ruhāyyīyāt of Omar Khayyām. The Arabic manuscripts have all been acquired in recent years and cover subjects such as history, law and Sufism. The Persian and Turkish manuscripts mainly deal with poetry, literature and history.

North American interest in the Muslim world is already strong and looks set to develop further. There are numerous learned societies and research institutions, ranging from the American Oriental Society through to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and the American Academy of Asian Studies. There are in the United States and Canada scores of special, Islamic study centres at universities — the Von Früeheim Center for Near Eastern Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles, the Middle East Languages and Area Studies Center at the University of Utah, the East–West Center at the University of Hawaii, the Duncan Black MacDonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, the Center for South Asia Studies at the University of California and the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Toronto. The library collections on Islam and in Islamic languages and cultures are among the finest in the world, ranging from the large printed book collections of the Library of Congress in Washington through to the impressive manuscript collections of Princeton University and the University of California at Los Angeles. There are numerous departments in universities offering courses in Islamic languages, literature, history, art and culture. Among the most famous are the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Culture, at Columbia University, the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University, the Near Eastern Languages and Literatures Graduate School at Yale University, and the Department of South and Southeast Asian Languages and Literature at the University of California. In Canada there is the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto, the Arab Studies Programme at the University of Montreal and the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Manitoba.

No longer can it be said that North America is isolated from or ignorant of the Muslim world. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a phenomenal flowering of academic and research institutions specializing in all aspects of Islam and Islamic civilization. But the United States today faces a Muslim world that in many ways distrusts and is suspicious of its motives, believing that American involvement in the affairs of Muslim countries must be motivated by a desire to dominate and control. The former imperial powers of Britain and France have faded; their influence in the Muslim world is much reduced. But to many Muslims, this decline has been counterbalanced by the rise of the United States, and its pre-eminence in world affairs. It does not take much for Muslims to see in it the successor to the old nineteenth-century European imperial powers. Whatever the political and economic realities of the United States’ present relations with the Islamic world, there is no doubt that there has been a genuine development in the way North Americans see the
Muslim world. No longer do they follow blindly the lead set by Europe. There is now a definite American approach to the study of Islam. The collections of Islamic manuscripts now held in North American libraries and research centres have helped create this independent scholarly tradition. They have been essential building blocks in the development of North America understanding of the Islamic world as a powerful and sophisticated culture and civilization. All the manuscripts in US and Canadian collections have reached North American through peaceful means. None was seized in acts of war or plundered from private or royal libraries. Each one is a symbol in itself of a free exchange of ideas and a genuine bridge between cultures. These manuscripts will indeed have achieved much if they can help East and West 'to see each other face to face, and seeing each other, recognize that they are brothers'.

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